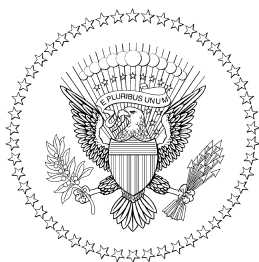


Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, May 30, 2005  
Volume 41—Number 21  
Pages 851–899

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**Editor's Note:** The President was at Camp David, MD, on May 27, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, May 27, 2005

**Proclamation 7905—Prayer for  
Peace, Memorial Day, 2005**

*May 20, 2005*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

On Memorial Day, we honor the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in service to our Nation. When the stakes were highest, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen answered the call of duty and made the ultimate sacrifice for the security of our country and the peace of the world.

Throughout our Nation's history, members of the Armed Forces have taken great risks to keep America strong and free. These proud patriots have defended the innocent, freed the oppressed, and helped spread the promise of liberty to all corners of the earth. In serving our Nation, they have been unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, and unmatched in decency. Because of their selfless courage, millions of people who once lived under tyranny now are free, and America is more secure.

On Memorial Day, we remember that this history of great achievement has been accompanied by great sacrifice. To secure our freedom, many heroic service members have given their lives. This year we mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, and we remember the Americans who died on distant shores defending our Nation in that war. On Memorial Day and all year long, we pray for the families of the fallen and show our respect for the contributions these men and women have made to the story of freedom. Our grateful Nation honors their selfless service, and we acknowledge a debt that is beyond our power to repay.

In respect for their devotion to America, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved on May 11, 1950, as amended (64 Stat. 158),

has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106–579, has also designated the minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 30, 2005, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11:00 a.m. of that day as a time to unite in prayer. I also ask all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. I urge the media to participate in these observances.

I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff until noon on this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States, and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 24, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 25. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

# **Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World**

*May 20, 2005*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped armed forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the global war on terrorism, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## ***The Global War on Terrorism***

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, and Southern Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our global war on terrorism.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the U.S. right to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time either the precise scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida.

These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and are actively pursuing and engaging

remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters. Approximately 90 U.S. personnel are also assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized the ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently, for a 12-month period from October 13, 2004, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1563 of September 13, 2004. The mission of the ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows reconstruction and the reestablishment of Afghan authorities. Currently, all 26 NATO nations contribute to the ISAF. Ten non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to the ISAF.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the approximately 520 enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004, noting the Iraqi Interim Government's request to retain the presence of the MNF. Under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to the security and stability in Iraq, as reconstruction continues, until the completion of Iraq's political transformation. These contributions include assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces and institutions, as the Iraqi people, represented by the Transitional National Assembly, draft a constitution and establish a constitutionally elected government. The U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 139,000 military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, our friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces are located in the Horn of Africa region, and the U.S. forces headquarters element in Djibouti provides command and control support as necessary for military operations against al-Qaida and other international terrorists in the Horn of Africa region, including Yemen. These forces also assist in enhancing counterterrorism capabilities in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, Eritrea, and Djibouti. In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

#### ***NATO-Led Kosovo Force (KFOR)***

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peace-keeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The mission of KFOR is to provide an international security presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (which is now Serbia and Montenegro); enforce the terms of the Undertaking on Demilitarization and Transformation of the former Kosovo Liberation Army; provide day-to-day operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, there are 23 NATO nations contributing to KFOR. Eleven non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is about 1,700 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 10 per-

cent of KFOR's total strength of approximately 17,000 personnel. Additionally, U.S. military personnel occasionally operate from Macedonia, Albania, and Greece in support of KFOR operations.

The U.S. forces have been assigned to a sector principally centered around Gnjilane in the eastern region of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment remains the primary military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. The KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels; provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside; and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence.

In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK continues to transfer additional competencies to the Kosovar Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which includes the President, Prime Minister, multiple ministries, and the Kosovo Assembly. The UNMIK retains ultimate authority in some sensitive areas such as police, justice, and ethnic minority affairs.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO has adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans. The UNMIK international police and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have full responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo except in the area of South Mitrovica, where KFOR and UNMIK share this responsibility due to security concerns. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have begun to assume responsibility for guarding patrimonial sites and established border-crossing checkpoints. The KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as needed.

### ***NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina***

Pursuant to the June 2004 decision made by NATO Heads of State and Government, and in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1575 of November 22, 2004, NATO concluded its Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and established NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo to continue to assist in implementing the Peace Agreement in conjunction with a newly established European Force (EUFOR). NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo, to which approximately 235 U.S. personnel are assigned, is, with EUFOR, the legal successor to SFOR. The principal tasks of NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo are providing advice on defense reform and performing operational supporting tasks, such as counterterrorism and supporting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **The President's Radio Address**

*May 21, 2005*

Good morning. Today I can report to you that we are making good progress in advancing the cause of freedom, defeating the forces of terror, and transforming our military so we can meet the emerging threats of the 21st century. As I speak, Laura is in the Middle East to help advance the freedom agenda, and her message is a powerful one, that by working together for liberty, we will

create a future of peace and opportunity for women and men worldwide.

On Monday, I will meet Afghan President Hamid Karzai at the White House to discuss freedom's remarkable progress in his nation. Afghanistan now has a constitution and an elected President, and its citizens will return to the polls this September to elect provincial councils in the lower house of the National Assembly. We're helping Afghanistan's elected government solidify these democratic gains and deliver real change. A nation that once knew only the terror of the Taliban is now seeing a rebirth of freedom, and we will help them succeed.

Terrorists know that there is no room for them as freedom takes root in the broader Middle East, so they are fighting to stop its progress. But in recent weeks, we have dealt them a series of devastating blows. In Afghanistan, we have brought to justice dozens of terrorists and insurgents. In Pakistan, one of Usama bin Laden's senior terrorist leaders, a man named al-Libbi, was brought to justice. In Iraq, we captured two deputies of the terrorist Zarqawi, and our forces have killed or captured hundreds of terrorists and insurgents near the Syrian border.

Our strategy is clear: We will fight the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. While some difficult days still lie ahead, these recent victories are making America safer and the world more secure.

As we make progress against today's enemies, we are also transforming our military to defeat the enemies we might face in the decades ahead. On Friday, I will speak to future leaders of our military who are graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy about how we are making our Armed Forces faster, more agile, and more lethal.

To deal with the emerging threats of the 21st century, we are building a military that can deploy rapidly and deliver more firepower with fewer forward-deployed forces. However, much of our military is still deployed in ways that reflect the threats of the cold war. So last summer, I announced a plan to reposition our forces over the next decade. This shift will bring home 60 to 70,000 uniformed personnel, while still maintaining a significant overseas presence. It will also allow us to reduce the stress on our military

families and make the best overall use of our resources. In the months and years ahead, we will continue to do what is necessary to prepare our Armed Forces to protect the American people in this new century.

The war on terror continues, and we are making solid progress, but we must not become complacent. We will continue to pursue terrorists abroad. We will continue to support democratic change throughout the world, including in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the broader Middle East. And we will do whatever it takes to support our men and women in uniform and give them the tools they need to prevail.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on May 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Abu Faraj al-Libbi, senior Al Qaida associate arrested in Pakistan on April 30; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Commencement Address at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan May 21, 2005**

Thank you, President Byker, members of the Calvin faculty, distinguished guests, parents, friends, family, and most importantly, the Class of 2005.

Thanks for having me. I was excited to come back to Calvin, and I was just telling Laura the other night about what fun it would be to come to Calvin College. I said, "You know, Laura, I love being around so many young folks. You know, it gives me a chance to relive my glory days in academia." [Laughter] She said, "George, that's not exactly how I would describe your college experience." [Laughter] She also said one other thing I think the graduates will appreciate hearing, a good piece of advice. She said, "The folks here are here to get their diploma, not to hear from an old guy go on too long."

[Laughter] So with that sage advice, here goes.

I bring a great message of hope and freedom to Calvin College Class of 2005: There is life after Professor Vanden Bosch and English 101. [Laughter] Someday you will appreciate the grammar and verbal skills you learned here. [Laughter] And if any of you wonder how far a mastery of the English language can take you, just look what it did for me. [Laughter]

I thank the moms and dads here for your sacrifice and for your love. I want to thank the faculty for your hard work and dedication. And again, I congratulate the Class of 2005. Soon you will collect your degrees and say goodbyes to a school that has been your home, and you will take your rightful place in a country that offers you the greatest freedom and opportunity on Earth. I ask that you use what you've learned to make your own contributions to the story of American freedom.

The immigrants who founded Calvin College came to America for the freedom to worship, and they built this great school on the sturdy ground of liberty. They saw in the American experiment the world's best hope for freedom, and they weren't the only ones excited by what they saw. In 1835, a young civil servant and aristocrat from France named Alexis de Tocqueville would publish a book about America that still resonates today.

The book is called "Democracy in America," and in it this young Frenchman said that the secret to America's success was our talent for bringing people together for the common good. De Tocqueville wrote that tyrants maintained their power by "isolating" their citizens and that Americans guaranteed their freedom by their remarkable ability to band together without any direction from government. The America he described offered the world something it had never seen before, a working model of a thriving democracy where opportunity was unbounded, where virtue was strong, and where citizens took responsibility for their neighbors.

Tocqueville's account is not just the observations of one man; it is the story of our founding. It is not just a description of America at a point in time; it is an agenda for

our time. Our Founders rejected both a radical individualism that makes no room for others and the dreary collectivism that crushes the individual. They gave us instead a society where individual freedom is anchored in communities. And in this hopeful new century, we have a great goal, to renew this spirit of community and thereby renew the character and compassion of our country.

First, we must understand that the character of our citizens is essential to society. In a free and compassionate society, the public good depends on private character. That character is formed and shaped in institutions like family, faith, and the many civil and—social and civic organizations, from the Boy Scouts to the Rotary Clubs. The future success of our Nation depends on our ability to understand the difference between right and wrong and to have the strength of character to make the right choices. Government cannot create character, but it can and should respect and support the institutions that do.

Second, we must understand the importance of keeping power close to the people. Local people know local problems; they know the names and faces of their neighbors. The heart and soul of America is in our local communities; it is in the citizen school boards that determine how our children are educated; it's in the city councils and State legislators that reflect the unique needs and priorities of the people they serve; it's in the volunteer groups that transform towns and cities into caring communities and neighborhoods. In the years to come, I hope that you'll consider joining these associations or serving in government, because when you come together to serve a cause greater than yourself, you will energize your communities and you will help build a more just and compassionate America.

Finally, we must understand that it is by becoming active in our communities that we move beyond our narrow interests. In today's complex world, there are a lot of things that pull us apart. We need to support and encourage the institutions and pursuits that bring us together. And we learn how to come together by participating in our churches and temples and mosques and synagogues, in civil rights associations, in our PTAs and Jaycees, in our gardening and book clubs, interest

groups, and chambers of commerce, in our service groups from soup kitchens to homeless shelters.

All these organizations promote the spirit of community and help us acquire the "habits of heart" that are so vital to a free society. And because one of the deepest values of our country is compassion, we must never turn away from any citizen who feels isolated from the opportunities of America. Our faith-based and community groups provide the armies of compassion that help people who wonder if the American Dream is meant for them. These armies of compassion are the great engines of social change. They serve individual and local needs, and they have been found at the front of every great movement in American history.

The history of forming associations dedicated to serving others is as old as America, itself. From abolition societies and suffrage movements to immigrant aid groups and prison reform ministries, America's social entrepreneurs have often been far ahead of our Government in identifying and meeting the needs of our fellow countrymen. Because they are closer to the people they serve, our faith-based and community organizations deliver better results than Government. And they have a human touch: When a person in need knocks on the door of a faith-based or community organization, he or she is welcomed as a brother or a sister.

No one understood this better than another 19th century visitor to America whose name is well known to Calvin College, Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper was a Dutchman who would be elected his nation's Prime Minister, and he knew all about the importance of associations because he founded so many of them, including two newspapers, a political party, and a university. Kuyper contrasted the humanizing influence of independent social institutions with the "mechanical character of government." And in a famous speech right here in Grand Rapids, he urged Dutch immigrants to resist the temptation to retreat behind their own walls. He told them to go out into their adopted America and make a true difference as true Christian citizens.

Our Government is encouraging all Americans to make a difference through our Faith-

Based and Community Initiative. We're mobilizing Americans to volunteer through the USA Freedom Corps. We'll do our part, but ultimately, service is up to you. It is your choice to make. As your generation takes its place in the world, all of you must make this decision: Will you be a spectator or a citizen? To make a difference in this world, you must be involved. By serving a higher calling here or abroad, you'll make your lives richer and build a more hopeful future for our world.

At Calvin College, you take this call to service to heart. You serve as "agents of renewal" across the Earth. You volunteer for Big Brothers/Big Sisters to mentor young people. You work at Bethany Christian Services here in Grand Rapids, one of the best-known adoption services in America. A former Calvin student and professor, Vern Ehlers, serves in the Halls of Congress. As the Class of 2005 goes out into the world, I ask you to embrace this tradition of service and help set an example for all Americans. As Americans, we share an agenda that calls us to action, a great responsibility to serve and love others, a responsibility that goes back to the greatest commandment.

This isn't a Democratic idea. This isn't a Republican idea. This is an American idea. It has sustained our Nation's liberty for more than 200 years. The Founders knew that too much Government leads to oppression but that too little Government can leave us helpless and alone. So they built a free society with many roots in community. And to keep the tree of liberty standing tall in the century before us, you must nourish those roots.

Today, the Calvin Class of 2005 looks out on an America that continues to be defined by the promise of our Declaration of Independence. We're still the Nation our Founders imagined, where individual freedom and opportunity is unbounded, where community is vibrant, where compassion keeps us from resting until all our citizens take their place at the banquet of freedom and equality. And with your help, we'll all do our part to transform our great land one person and one community at a time.

Thank you for having me. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. at the Calvin College Fieldhouse. In his remarks, he referred to Gaylen J. Byker, president, Calvin College.

### **The President's News Conference With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan** *May 23, 2005*

**President Bush.** Thank you. Welcome. Mr. President, welcome back to the White House. I am honored to stand by the first democratically elected leader in the 5,000-year history of Afghanistan. Congratulations.

**President Karzai.** Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

**President Bush.** I want to thank you for your friendship and your commitment to freedom. I especially want to thank you for being such a wonderful host to my wife, Laura. She came back overwhelmed by the experience, touched by the people she met, and optimistic about the future for your country. So thanks for being a good host, and thanks for being such a fine inspiration to not only the people of your country but showing the countries in your neighborhood what's possible.

Your leadership has been strong, and it's in our interests that Afghanistan be free. Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terrorists. Afghanistan is a key partner in the global war on terror. Our troops have fought and will continue to fight side by side to defeat the few who want to stop the ambitions of the many.

**President Karzai.** Exactly.

**President Bush.** Increasing numbers of low-level Taliban are getting the message that Afghanistan's society is peaceful and optimistic, and I appreciate your efforts to reach out to the low-level members of the Taliban. I am impressed by the progress that you're making toward a market economy and a full-fledged democracy.

One of the things that's very important, that is—a shift of opinion is taking place where now women are equal partners in society. Over 40 percent of the voters in that October day were women voters. Girls are now going to school. Women entrepreneurs are opening businesses. The President was

telling me that there's quite a number of candidates who've filed for the upcoming legislative elections who are women. The model, the example being set by Afghanistan in that part of the world is an important message, because you can't have a free and hopeful society unless women are full participants in the society.

And so Mr. President, thank you for your leadership. We're looking forward to watching and helping make sure these elections go forward in a peaceful manner. It's a—the number of candidates that—who have filed are—is quite impressive. I think you maybe told me over 5,000?

**President Karzai.** Over 5,000.

**President Bush.** Yes, 5,000 people have filed for office. It's a—democracy is flourishing.

We spent a lot of time talking about the challenges we continue to face. Our objective is to continue to train the Afghan army so that they're capable of defeating the terrorists. However, today, it's important for the Afghan people to understand that we have a strategic vision about our relationship with Afghanistan.

I've signed a strategic partnership with the President. It's a partnership that we've been working on for quite awhile. It's a partnership that establishes regular high-level exchanges on political security and economic interests of—economic issues of mutual interests. We will consult with Afghanistan if it perceives its territorial integrity, independence, or security is at risk. We will help the Afghan people build strong, lasting government and civic institutions. We'll continue to support reconstruction, economic development, and investments that will help educate and build the skills of the Afghan people.

I've got great faith in the future in Afghanistan. First, I've got great faith in the ability of democracy to provide hope. And I've got faith in this man as a leader. He has shown tremendous courage in the face of difficult odds. He's been a strong leader. He's a good friend to our country. And Mr. President, it's my honor to welcome you back here. Congratulations.

**President Karzai.** Thank you very much. My turn?

**President Bush.** Your turn. [Laughter]

**President Karzai.** Mr. President—

**President Bush.** Don't give these an opening; they'll jump in there at a moment's notice. [Laughter]

**President Karzai.** Mr. President, it's a great pleasure and privilege to be visiting the United States again, to be visiting you in the White House with the usual warmth and hospitality. I was in Boston yesterday, meeting with all the students on their commencement day. I was given an honorary degree, which was a great honor for me, and received tremendous warmth there as well.

The United States has been the country with whose help we have rebuilt our country—are in the process of rebuilding our country. And you have been at the forefront of that effort with us in Afghanistan and in the rest of the world. I'm here today to thank you, Mr. President, once again for your leadership in providing Afghanistan the security, the reconstruction, and the freedoms that the Afghan people have today.

You cannot imagine, Mr. President, and I cannot tell you that in a few words—there are so many words, it has to take a much longer time for me to describe to you what Afghanistan was going through 3 years ago. So it's difficult to say, and I'm sometimes—rather often—neither our press nor your press nor the press in the rest of the world pick up the miseries of the Afghans 3 years ago and what has been achieved since then, until today. We have a constitution. We had a Presidential election, and I'm glad it turned out to be good for me. [Laughter]

**President Bush.** I know how you feel. [Laughter]

**President Karzai.** Yes, well—[laughter]—I believe we share that feeling, yes. And we are going to have a parliamentary election in 3 months' time. And I just informed the President that we have, as of yesterday—as of the day before yesterday, over 5,000 candidates for the National Assembly and for the provincial assemblies. There are women from all the provinces of the country will be coming to the Parliament. So the country is moving forward.

We have been talking with your officials in Afghanistan and have conveyed to you through your Embassy and Government the

desire of the Afghan people to have a strategic partnership with America, because after the completion of the parliamentary elections, the Bonn process will come to an end. From that point onward, we would like the world to recognize that with the completion of the Bonn process and the arrival of the Afghan Parliament, Afghanistan will not suddenly stand on its own feet. Politically, we will have done the process—politically, we will have completed the process, but in terms of the institutional strength, Afghanistan will continue to need a lot of support.

And I'm glad that you signed with me today a memorandum of understanding on the long-term partnership between Afghanistan and the United States of America, which will make sure that Afghanistan continues to receive reconstruction assistance, which will make sure that Afghanistan continues to receive training from the U.S. for its military and the police, and which will enable Afghanistan to stand on its own feet eventually and be a good, active member of the region, contributing to peace and stability in the region, and be a bridge between various parts of that part of the world for trade and values.

Mr. President, I'm here today to thank you for all that you have done for Afghanistan. And we are very, very happy. We are grateful. You sent the Vice President of the United States to come and attend the Inauguration in Afghanistan. It was a tremendous honor for us to receive him there, to have him there. It was the manifestation of the commitment of the United States and yourself to the Afghan people to have that day attended by the Vice President. And we are very, very happy, more importantly, to have had the First Lady to visit us in Afghanistan. We were thrilled. The Afghan women were thrilled. The Afghan society was thrilled. And now you guess whose turn it is now to come to Afghanistan. *[Laughter]* So we'll be hoping to receive you there very soon.

**President Bush.** Thank you for the invitation. *[Laughter]*

**President Karzai.** The country is much greener than it was in the past few years. I thank you once again for receiving us here and for the support you've given to us all along and will continue to do so. Thank you.

**President Bush.** Thank you, Mr. President. Of course, I don't want to correct my friend, but I must. In thanking me, you're really thanking the American people.

**President Karzai.** Of course.

**President Bush.** And the American people are most impressed by the progress you've made, Mr. President, and it's progress that we look forward to working with you so that you can continue to make progress.

And in the spirit of free press, we'll answer a couple of questions.

**President Karzai.** Yes, we all know that, yes. *[Laughter]*

**President Bush.** Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

#### ***Afghanistan-U.S. Cooperation***

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, will you give the Karzai Government custody of Afghan citizens detained by the United States? And are you willing to give Afghanistan more say in U.S. military matters in their country?

And to President Karzai, did you discuss the prisoner abuse at Bagram issue with the President?

**President Bush.** First, in terms of more say over our military, our relationship is one of cooperate and consult. Of course our troops will respond to U.S. commanders, but our U.S. commanders and our diplomatic mission there is in a consultative relationship with the Government. It's a free society. There is a democratically elected Government. They've invited us in, and we'll consult with them in terms of how to achieve mutual goals, and that is to rout out the remnants of Al Qaida, to deal with those folks who would come and like to create harm to U.S. citizens and/or Afghan citizens.

I must say the Afghan military is making great progress. It hasn't been all that long ago that we started a training mission. Now there's over 25,000 troops who are trained and ready to fight, and they take the fight to these thugs that are coming across the border to create havoc. And we've got another, I think, 22,000 to train to get this army fully stood up. Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is the same. I mean, we want these new democracies to be able to defend themselves. And so we will continue to work with the

Afghans to train them and to cooperate and consult with the Government.

The other aspect of the question?

***Afghan Detainees in Guantanamo/  
Prisoner Abuse***

**Q.** The prisoners who——

**President Bush.** Oh, the prisoners, yes. Our policy, as you know, has been to work our way through those who are being held in Guantanamo and send them back to the host countries, and we will do so over time, with the Afghan Government. Part of the issue is to make sure there is a place where the prisoners can be held. As I explained to the President, that our policy is, one, where we want the people to be sent home, but, two, we've got to make sure the facilities are there—facilities where these people can be housed and fed and guarded.

Now, you asked about the prison—yes, he did bring up the prison abuse.

**President Karzai.** On the question of the prisoner abuse, we are, of course, sad about that. But let me make sure that you all know that that does not reflect on the American people.

Right now in Afghanistan there is an Italian lady that has been kidnapped by an Afghan man, while there are hundreds of Afghan women demonstrating outside in the streets of Kabul demanding the release of that woman, the Italian lady. So the prisoner abuse thing is not at all a thing that we attribute to anybody else but those individuals.

The Afghan people are grateful, very, very much to the American people. They recognize that individual acts do not reflect either on governments or on societies. These things happen everywhere. As we are sad, we recognize that the American people, kind as they are to Afghanistan, have nothing to do with that.

And I'm glad to tell you that I was reading today somewhere that one of those persons has been given a sentence of prison for 3 months and removed from his job, and that's a good thing. We, I must repeat strongly, are fully aware of the tremendously good values of the American people and of their kind attitude toward us and others in this world.

Thank you.

**President Bush.** Somebody from the Afghan press?

**President Karzai.** Anybody from the Afghan press? Do we have an Afghan press? Oh, here he is. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, a question was asked in Dari and was translated as follows.*]

***Afghan Economic Development/Opium***

**Interpreter.** This question is for President Bush. Question was, besides security and military assistance, Afghanistan needs more economic assistance. How can the U.S. assist more in building the economic infrastructure of Afghanistan?

**President Bush.** Right. As you know, we cooperated early with Japan and Saudi Arabia in helping them build a very important highway. I can remember when then-Secretary of State Powell came in and asked whether or not I thought this made sense, and I did. And I talked—I think I talked to you about it in our first visit.

**President Karzai.** Yes, yes.

**President Bush.** I hope that highway is complete—if not, being completed.

**President Karzai.** It is.

**President Bush.** We talked today about electricity. Interestingly enough, Afghanistan has got natural gas resources, and that those gas resources can be used to fire electricity plants which will be helpful for the infrastructure. And as a matter of fact, thanks to the United States Congress, there is reconstruction money in the supplemental and the budget, and that's good. And so those are ways we can help.

The truth of the matter—another way we can help is to diversify the agricultural sector, which leads to a subject that we spent some time on, and that is opium and poppies. As you know, there are—there's too much poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. And I made it very clear to the President that this is—that we have got to work together to eradicate poppy crop. And the President, not only in this meeting but in other meetings, has been very forthcoming about the desire to eradicate poppy. And as a matter of fact, according to a United Nations' report, there is less poppy today than the previous year.

**President Karzai.** Exactly.

**President Bush.** The President can give you some statistics on that if you're interested. One of the interesting issues, however, besides poppy crop eradication and, frankly, bringing people to justice who are running drugs is to—is for crop substitution. And the—President Karzai was talking about how the quality of the pomegranate that used to be grown in Afghanistan—evidently it's quite famous for—the country is quite famous for growing pomegranates.

**President Karzai.** Yes, yes.

**President Bush.** Or honeydew melons. In other words, there are some specialty crops, along with wheat and corn, that can and should be grown in Afghanistan. We look forward to working—the President brought his Agricultural Minister with him, and we look forward to working on this aspect of economic development. After all, Afghanistan has had a long history of farming. And we can do a lot to help the farmers get back on their feet and diversify away from poppies.

And so there are some areas where we discussed help. The truth of the matter is, though, that it's very important for your Government to make—continue to make—and I'm confident the President will—but continue to make the right decisions about rule of law and transparency and decisions that will encourage an open marketplace so that people will feel comfortable investing in your country.

I don't know if you want to comment on that—on the poppy issue.

**President Karzai.** On the drugs issue, yes, yes. Mr. President, indeed, Afghanistan is suffering from the cultivation of poppies, which is undermining our economy. It's giving us a bad name, worst of all. Just after the Inauguration, a day after the Vice President and Secretary Rumsfeld left Afghanistan for the U.S., we called a meeting of the Afghan elders and representatives and spoke to them about the curse of poppies in Afghanistan. Their response to that was very positive. A lot of provinces that were the biggest producers of poppy refrained from producing poppies. Three years ago, I saw a report in the press that the province of Nangarhar, which used to produce poppies, has now reduced poppies by 80 percent, the

same as in Helmand, the same as in Badakhshan, the same as in other areas where poppies were grown.

So we are hoping that Afghanistan this year will have something between 20 to 30 percent reduction in poppies all over the country, and that is a lot. When I was addressing the Afghan people a few months ago, I was not expecting the response to be so positive or that we will have poppy reduction by so many percentages in a year. Now if this trend continues, we'll have no poppies, hopefully, in Afghanistan in another 5 or 6 years.

But equally important is the provision of alternative livelihoods to the Afghan people. The President mentioned pomegranates, honeydew melon—lots of other things in Afghanistan that people destroyed in order to replace with poppies have to be now brought back to the lives of the Afghan farmers' alternative livelihood. And our adjudication to the arrest of drug dealers, mafia, the producers of the labs, is going on. With this trend and with proper alternative livelihood, hopefully in 5 to 6 years, Afghanistan should be free of poppies. That's a promise we have given to the world and to the Afghan people, and that's a promise that we will deliver on. Hold us accountable on that.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

### **Judicial Nominees**

**Q.** Mr. President, on judicial nominees, are you willing to risk a stalling of your domestic agenda in order to get votes on judicial nominees? And what do you say to critics who said the Republicans did basically the same thing to some of President Clinton's nominees?

**President Bush.** Steve, I have made my position very clear, and that is my job is to pick people who will interpret the Constitution, not use the bench from which to write law. That's what I campaigned on. I said, "If I'm the President, I will pick people who do that." I said, "I'll pick people who are—will bring great credit to the bench." And that's exactly what I've done, consistent with judicial philosophy in my picks as well as the character of the people I pick. And I expect them to get an up-or-down vote. That's what I expect. And I think the American people

expect that as well. People ought to have a fair hearing, and they ought to get an up-or-down vote on the floor.

Why don't you go with one final question. We've got this lady reporter here. Yes.

**President Karzai.** All right. Lady.

### ***Demonstrations in Afghanistan/Prison Abuse***

**Q.** Just to follow up on the treatment of the prisoners. Mr. President, you know, anti-American feeling is running high in the Muslim world. We've seen it in Afghanistan after the alleged disintegration of the Koran in Guantanamo. After meeting with the President, how do you assure the Muslim world and Afghan people that have seen death as a result of the article, that this incident in Bagram and other treatment of prisoners is isolated incident, and it's not systemic?

And if I may ask you, Mr. President, as you know, the casualties of Iraq is again high today, 50 more people dying. Do you think that insurgence is getting harder now to defeat militarily? Thank you.

**President Bush.** No, I don't think so. I think they're being defeated, and that's why they continue to fight. The worst thing for them is to see democracy. The President can speak to that firsthand. The worst problem that an ideolog that uses terror to try to get their way is to see a free society emerge. And I'm confident we're making great progress in Iraq.

And clearly, it's dangerous, and we mourn the loss of life. On the other hand, the 8½ million Iraqis who went to the polls sent a very clear message to the world that they want to be free.

**President Karzai.** Ma'am, yes, we discussed those questions on the demonstrations, or the so-called demonstrations in part of the—parts of Afghanistan. You saw that Government buildings were burned and private property was damaged, broken. Those demonstrations were, in reality, not related to the Newsweek story. They were more against the elections in Afghanistan. They were more against the progress in Afghanistan. They were more against the strategic partnership with the United States.

We know who did it. We know the guys. We know the people behind those dem-

onstrations. And if—unfortunately, you don't hear—follow the Afghan press, but if you listen to the Voice of America, the Radio Liberty, and the BBC, the Afghan population condemned that—those acts of arson in Afghanistan.

Of course, we are as Muslims very much unhappy with Newsweek bringing a matter so serious in the gossip column. It's really something that one shouldn't do, that responsible journalism shouldn't do at all. But Newsweek's story is not America's story. That's what—that's what we understand in Afghanistan. America has over a thousand mosques. I have gone and prayed in mosques here in America. I've prayed in Virginia. I've gone and prayed in Maryland. I've been to a mosque in Washington. And thousands of Afghans have been to mosques here in town, and as a matter of fact, tens of thousands of Muslims are going on a daily basis to mosques in America and praying.

So—and this is what was also reflected in Afghanistan. People spoke in the mosques, the clergy, and said, "What the hell are you doing?" There is a respect, there is this freedom in America for religion, and there are Muslims on a daily basis praying in mosques in America. And there are Korans, Holy Korans, all over America in homes and mosques. So it was a political act, a political act against Afghanistan's stability, which we have condemned, which the Afghan people have condemned.

On the issue of prisoners, I spoke earlier, it does not reflect at all on American people. On the contrary, it's an individual act just like that bad Afghan kidnapped an Italian lady. And it's not the work of the Afghan people. In the same way, we treat this case.

**President Bush.** Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:03 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Agriculture and Food Obaidullah Ramin of Afghanistan. President Karzai referred to Italian aid worker Clementina Cantoni, who was kidnapped in Kabul, Afghanistan, on May 16.

## **Joint Declaration of the United States-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership**

*May 23, 2005*

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in December 2001, the United States and Afghanistan have made great progress in the pursuit of common strategic objectives. Together we have disrupted international terrorist networks and worked to ensure that Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for terrorists. The United States has supported the Afghan people as they have established a moderate, representative government. During this time, the U.S. Government and the American people have demonstrated a commitment to an Afghanistan that is democratic, free, and able to provide for its own security.

Afghanistan expresses the profound gratitude of the Afghan people to the people of the United States of America. Thanks to the generosity of the American people and U.S. leadership, this extraordinary effort has enabled the Afghan people to regain hope and confidence and to renew their vision for achieving prosperity and peace.

Afghanistan confronts important challenges to its security and its efforts to build a government based on democratic principles, respect for human rights, and a market economy. To address these challenges, Afghanistan proposed that the United States join in a strategic partnership and establish close cooperation, including regular, high-level exchanges on the political, security, and economic issues contained herein and other issues of mutual interest. The United States and Afghanistan plan to work together to develop appropriate arrangements and agreements to implement their strategic partnership.

This shared effort will be based on a number of key principles, including a dedication to the rule of law, protection of the human rights and civil liberties of all individuals regardless of ethnic affiliations or gender, support for democratic governance, and reliance on the free market as the best means to further Afghanistan's economic progress. The strategic partnership's primary goal will be to strengthen U.S.-Afghan ties to help ensure Afghanistan's long-term security, democracy,

and prosperity. It should contribute to peaceful and productive relations between Afghanistan and its neighbors. It is not directed against any third country.

This partnership will serve as the basis for our common efforts to cooperate in the war against international terror and the struggle against violent extremism, to promote stability and prosperity in the region, and to remain steadfast in supporting Afghanistan's campaign to eradicate poppy cultivation, provide alternate livelihoods assistance, and fight the production and trafficking of drugs. The partnership will be anchored in the constitutions of our two countries, and will be guided by the United States and Afghanistan's respective obligations under the United Nations Charter and other international agreements and conventions.

Decades of civil war, political violence, and interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs make Afghanistan's security, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity particularly crucial areas for U.S.-Afghan cooperation. To enhance Afghanistan's long-term democracy, prosperity, and security, we intend to work closely together:

### ***For Democracy and Governance***

- Support democratic good governance and the development of civil society based on the rule of law and human rights and encourage broad-based political participation in Afghanistan.
- Help build strong, lasting Afghan Government and civic institutions and support political traditions that are efficient and responsive to the needs of the Afghan people.
- Encourage the advancement of freedom and democracy in the wider region.
- Support Afghanistan's initiative to restore the country's historic role as a land bridge connecting Central and South Asia and to shift the pattern of regional relations from rivalry to economic and political cooperation.
- Foster cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbors and deter meddling in its internal affairs.
- Support people-to-people exchanges and partnerships to strengthen ties between American and Afghan society,

thereby fostering common outlooks and collaboration on the challenges and opportunities before us.

#### ***For Prosperity***

- Facilitate and support Afghanistan's integration into regional and world economies and appropriate international organizations.
- Help develop a legal and institutional framework for a thriving private sector and an environment favorable to international investment in Afghanistan.
- Encourage and facilitate involvement of U.S. businesses in ventures that accelerate the development of Afghan firms and the private sector.
- Continue the reconstruction of Afghanistan and investments in the people of Afghanistan and encourage other nations to do so.

#### ***For Security***

- Help organize, train, equip, and sustain Afghan security forces as Afghanistan develops the capacity to undertake this responsibility.
- Consult with respect to taking appropriate measures in the event that Afghanistan perceives that its territorial integrity, independence, or security is threatened or at risk.
- Assist the Afghan Government in security sector reform.
- Continue to conduct counter-terrorism operations in cooperation with Afghan forces.
- Support Coalition assistance to the Afghan Government's counter-narcotics programs.
- Continue intelligence sharing.
- Strengthen Afghanistan's ties with NATO.
- Support border security initiatives.

It is understood that in order to achieve the objectives contained herein, U.S. military forces operating in Afghanistan will continue to have access to Bagram Air Base and its facilities, and facilities at other locations as may be mutually determined and that the U.S. and Coalition forces are to continue to have the freedom of action required to con-

duct appropriate military operations based on consultations and pre-agreed procedures.

As Afghan Government capabilities increase, Afghanistan will continue to cooperate against terrorism, to promote regional security, and to combat the drug trade; the Afghan Government, over time, will move to assume Afghan security force sustainment costs; and the Afghan Government intends to maintain capabilities for the detention, as appropriate, of persons apprehended in the War on Terror.

As Afghanistan develops its political system, the United States looks to Afghanistan to respect human rights and develop a just and inclusive society. Regular, free, and fair democratic elections, a free press, and the active implementation of Afghanistan's constitution are hallmarks of the necessary commitment to these principles. The United States relies on the Government of Afghanistan to maintain its firm commitment against the production, processing, and trafficking of narcotics and to assume responsibility for countering narcotics as police, prosecutorial, and prison capacity is developed and enhanced. Finally, the United States relies on Afghanistan's commitment to create a legal framework and an environment favorable to private sector and domestic and international investment that offers economic opportunities to all Afghan people.

The Afghan people have made tremendous sacrifices and shown great courage in the pursuit of freedom. The United States shares their vision of a country that is democratic, at peace, and working to improve the lives of all Afghans and that plays an important and positive role in the affairs of the region and the world. We are confident that the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership will play a central role in helping Afghanistan achieve these goals.

*George W. Bush*  
President of the  
United States

*Hamid Karzai*  
President of the  
Islamic Republic of  
Afghanistan

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

**Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony  
for Stephen L. Johnson as  
Administrator of the Environmental  
Protection Agency**  
*May 23, 2005*

**The President.** Good afternoon. I'm proud to visit the headquarters of the Environmental Protection Agency. I am honored to be here to congratulate Steve Johnson on becoming America's 11th EPA Administrator. Congratulations. It is good to be up here with Debbie, your wonderful family, as well as your dad, Bill.

I'm sorry that Laura couldn't join us, but today she's been touring the Egyptian desert. [Laughter] She tells me that if you take away the pyramids, it just looks like west Texas. [Laughter]

I want to thank Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta for joining us. I want to thank the former EPA Administrator, the former Governor of New Jersey, Christie Todd Whitman, for coming today.

I thank Congressman Charlie Taylor of North Carolina for joining us today. Congressman, I'm proud you're here. He happens to be the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Welcome.

My administration is fulfilling our responsibility to be good stewards of the Earth. Today, America's air, land, and water are cleaner than they were in 2001. We've reduced air pollution by more than 10 percent. We put in place clean diesel rules that will cut emissions from heavy-duty vehicles by more than 90 percent over 10 years. We've restored nearly 1,200 abandoned industrial sites to productive use. We worked to pass the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to protect forests and wildlife and homeowners against catastrophic fires. We've substantially increased funding to improve water quality in the Great Lakes.

Our policies are protecting the environment while also promoting economic growth. And I want to thank each employee of this Agency for helping make this progress possible.

Steve Johnson is the right man to build on this progress. He has 24 years of experience here at the EPA. He is the first career

EPA employee to hold the office of Administrator. Steve is also the first professional scientist to lead the agency. With this background, Steve will help us continue to place sound scientific analysis at the heart of all major environmental decisions.

The EPA recently finalized a rule that places the first-ever national cap on mercury emissions from powerplants, which will result in a nearly 70-percent decrease in these emissions. And we issued the Clean Air Interstate Rule to reduce air pollution from powerplants by 70 percent. These rules are a good start, but they are not a substitute for effective legislation. So one of Steve's first tasks—and I look forward to joining you on this task—to further reduce air pollution is to work with Congress to pass the Clear Skies legislation. Clear Skies is a commonsense, pro-environment, pro-jobs initiative. And Congress needs to pass the bill this year.

Steve will also build on EPA's work to improve the quality and security of our drinking water. We're enforcing strict standards to bring cleaner water to communities across our country. The budget I submitted this year to Congress includes a \$44 million pilot program to develop tools to better monitor urban water systems, so we can detect contamination as quickly as possible. The budget also increases support for EPA homeland security programs by more than 70 percent next year. Under Steve's leadership, we will work to ensure that every American community continues to have a water supply that is clean and is safe.

We must build on our progress in the conservation and protection of our wetlands, soil, and wildlife habitats. On Earth Day last year, I announced a new goal to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million acres of wetlands by 2009. After 1 year, we've already enhanced over 800,000 acres of wetlands. And that puts us on a pace to meet our goal.

And finally, we will continue our enforcement strategy, which focuses on achieving real environmental improvements that benefit everyone. Since 2001, the EPA has increased compliance inspections by 19 percent and civil investigations by 24 percent. And last year, the Agency provided compliance assistance to over 730,000 individuals and businesses.

Our strategy is working. Last year we obtained commitments to reduce future pollution by an estimated 1 billion pounds, an increase of 50 percent over the 2001 level. And I want to thank all the EPA employees who work in the field to work on this collaborative effort.

As Steve leads the EPA, he will maintain our commonsense approach of collaborating with leaders and volunteers at the local level to find the best solutions to meet our national goals. We'll continue to vigorously enforce our environmental laws. We'll encourage good stewardship of natural resources, and we will focus on results. We'll continue to protect the health of our citizens and help guarantee the quality of our air, water, and land for generations to come.

I'm looking forward to working with this good man as he leads this important Agency. Steve, congratulations. God bless.

*[At this point, Administrator Johnson made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:48 p.m. in the Rachel Carson Room at the Environmental Protection Agency's Ariel Rios Building. In his remarks, he referred to Administrator Johnson's wife, Deborah Johnson, and his father, William Johnson. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Administrator Johnson.

### Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Greece, New York

May 24, 2005

**The President.** Thank you all. Go ahead and be seated. Be seated, thank you. We've got to get to work. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome, and thanks for caring about the future of our country, because that's what we're here to discuss. Before I get to the Social Security issue, I do want to thank some people.

First I want to thank the Greece Athena Middle and High Schools for letting us use this fantastic facility. It really is beautiful, yes. A fantastic place, isn't it? Yes. I want to thank

Helen Wahl and Dick Snyder. Helen is the principal of the high school; Dick Snyder is the principal of the middle school. I want to thank all the teachers. I want to thank the superintendent. I want to thank all the folks who care a lot about making sure the kids get educated here in this part of the world.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. Yes, you'd probably rather have her here than me, wouldn't you? Anyway—[laughter].

**Audience member.** We didn't say that.

**The President.** Well, no, but you thought it. You didn't say it, but I could tell you thought it. You're not the only person here who feels that way, I want you to know. She's doing great. She is on a trip promoting the freedom agenda. She's made it very clear to people in the Middle East, you can't have a complete society unless women participate fully in the society in the Middle East. I'm really proud of her. I'm a fortunate man that she said yes when I asked her to marry me back in Midland, Texas. She's a great First Lady. I'm looking forward to having her come home tonight, back to the White House.

I thank Congressman Tom Reynolds. He's an effective United States Congressman who cares a lot about this district. I'm proud to call him friend. I'm proud to call Congressman Sherry Boehlert friend as well. Sherry is from the district next door; I've known him for a long time. He's a good, thoughtful man. He's a fine United States Congressman. Congressman Jim Walsh is with us today. He too is a fine United States Congressman. And I was proud to be traveling with Congressman Randy Kuhl. He's a freshman Member of the House of Representatives, doing a great job. Thank you all for coming.

They wanted to ride on Air Force One. [Laughter] Proud to make room for them. They want to ride back on Air Force One. [Laughter] And they probably want a meal on Air Force One. Save up your appetite, fellows, you got a good meal coming.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who have joined us today. I'm proud you're here.

There's two athletes in the audience I want to pay recognition to. First of all, a person you all know well, really a fine member of the community, member of the NFL Hall

of Fame, Jim Kelly. Thank you for coming. Good to see you again, Jim. And at the other age of the—at the other end of the age spectrum is a fine athlete from this part of the world. I just met her. As you know, I'm a baseball person. I love baseball. The fact that somebody would pitch a perfect game at any level of baseball is amazing. The fact that a person would pitch a perfect game and strike out every batter is even more amazing. So welcome a fantastic pitcher in the—representing the Dodgers baseball team, from Little League Baseball, Katie Brownell. Thanks for coming.

And finally, one other person, before I get to the topic at hand, I'd like to introduce, is a woman named George-Ann Schaufelle. George-Ann is a volunteer. And the reason I bring up people who volunteer is I want to remind you that the true strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens, that if you want to be a participant in America and in the future America, volunteer to make somebody's life better. Feed the hungry; help find shelter for the homeless. George-Ann is involved with the Literacy Volunteers of Rochester program, helping somebody learn to read. I can't think of a better way to pass on a gift from one generation to the next than to mentor somebody, particularly somebody who needs to learn to read.

My point is this: Serve your community and serve your country by taking time out of your busy lives to volunteer to make somebody's life better, to answer that universal call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. I don't know where George-Ann is. Where are you, George-Ann? Thanks for coming. Thanks for being a great role model.

We got a lot to do in Washington, DC. One of the big issues, of course, is Social Security—although yesterday there was some progress made. I'm pleased that the Senate is moving forward on my judicial nominees who were previously being blocked. These nominees have been waiting years for an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor, and now they'll get one. It's about time we're making some progress.

It's important for this Nation to address issues. I believe the job of the President is

to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents or future generations. I believe my job in representing everyone who lives in this country is that when I see a problem, is to say to the United States Congress, "Let's work together to solve the problem." And folks, we've got a problem when it comes to Social Security.

First, let me start by saying that Franklin Roosevelt did a good thing when he created the Social Security system. Social Security has been an important part of a lot of people's lives in America. The Social Security system created by Franklin Roosevelt provided a safety net for people in their retirement, and it worked. There are a lot of people still in this country counting on their Social Security check. And therefore, I want to start by saying to people who are getting their check, people who were born prior to 1950, the system will not change when it comes to you. The system has got plenty of money in it to make sure you get your check.

The reason I have to say that is because I understand how the Social Security issue has worked in the past: Somebody like me talks about it, and then somebody comes in behind by telling seniors, "Really what he's saying is he's going to take away your check." That's old-style, scare politics, but it is a part of the American system. And so people have got to understand when we start talking about Social Security, to strengthen the Social Security system for generations to come, to deal with the problem I'm about to describe to you, that if you're a senior in Greece, New York, you're going to get your check. It's the folks coming up that you need to worry about. See, if you're a grandmother, you're going to get your check. You need to worry about your grandson.

We're about to talk to a generation of folks from this part of the world about Social Security. Now, here's the reason I even have to bring it up, that the pay-as-you-go system in Social Security is confronting some serious demographic difficulties.

Now, the system is pay-as-you-go. That means when you pay in, we go ahead and pay out. Your payroll tax goes into a—not into trust that we hold for your account; your payroll tax goes into an account, and we pay out the money for the retirees, and with any

money left over, we spend it on general government. It's important for people to understand that aspect of Social Security. In other words, it's not a trust. In other words, we're not taking your money and holding it for you and then giving it back to you when you retire. We're taking your money; we're spending it on current retirees; and in that more money is coming in that needs to go out for the retirees, we're spending on other programs. And all that's left behind in Social Security is a group of file cabinets with IOUs in it. That's the way the system works. It's called pay-as-you-go.

Now, what's going to change from today in terms of the pay-as-you-go system is that there's a lot of people getting ready to retire. I happen to be one of them. *[Laughter]* At least I reach retirement age in 2008. As I like to remind people, that's a convenient date for me—*[laughter]*—particularly the end of 2008. And there are a lot of people like me. We're called the baby boomers. I'm looking at some baby boomers out there. As a matter of fact, by the time the baby boomers fully retire, there's going to be over 70 million of us getting paid by younger workers who are paying through payroll—paying our retirement through payroll taxes. Today, there's about 40 million retirees. So, you see, a lot more people are going to be—having to be taken care of in the retirement system through the pay-as-you-go system.

And not only that, we're going to live longer than the previous generation. And not only that, our benefits are going to rise faster—at least the promised benefits will rise faster than a previous generation. So you've got a lot of people who will be living longer, getting paid greater benefits, with fewer people paying into the system.

In 1950, there were some 16-to-1 workers paying into the system for each beneficiary. Today, there's 3.3 workers for every beneficiary. Soon there's going to be 2 workers for every beneficiary. So I think you're beginning to get a sense of the math. A lot of us are going to get greater benefits; we're going to live longer, with fewer of the young people paying in the system to take care of us.

Now, what ends up happening under that type of system is that, in 2017, the system starts to go into the red, more money going

out than coming in on Social Security benefits, for Social Security benefits relative to the payroll taxes. And it gets worse every year. In 2027, it's projected there will be \$200 billion in the hole, \$200 billion more benefits going out than payroll taxes coming in. Every year worse after that, until 2041, all those—the paper in those file cabinets in West Virginia are just eaten up, bankrupt. The system is bust.

What we're asking youngsters to do is to contribute money through payroll taxes into a system that will be broke in 2041, unless we do something about it. And so that's the problem. And it's a real problem. My friend Tim Penny, former Congressman from Minnesota, is going to describe the problem to you in further detail.

Now, I have a duty not only to describe the problem; I believe I have a duty to come forth and say, "Let's do something about it," and "Here's some ideas to the United States Congress." I did it. I stood up in front of the Congress at my State of the Union; I said, "Here's a problem. By the way, here's some ideas. All ideas are on the table except running up the payroll tax rate"—which I think would hurt the economy—"all ideas are on the table; bring them forward." And then I further refined that by talking about some of these ideas. And the reason I'm doing it is because I understand if we wait, it costs \$600 billion a year more every year we wait. See, if we don't do anything, if we don't come up with a solution to permanently solve this problem, it is conceivable a younger generation of Americans will have to pay an 18-percent payroll tax or benefits will have to be cut by 30 percent or the rest of Government will have to be cut substantially in order to make sure that the promises that have been made are promises that will be kept.

And so here are some ideas Congress needs to consider. First of all, that a future generation should receive benefits equal to or greater than the benefits enjoyed by today's seniors. That seems like a reasonable principle as we go forward. Secondly, that the Social Security system should be designed such—the future Social Security—by the way, if you were born prior to 1950, nothing changes. What I'm talking about here doesn't pertain to you. You're going to get

your check. The system is going to be exactly the way it is. There's plenty of money in it to take care of you. It's the younger folks that need to be paying attention to what I'm talking about.

And so I think a second principle ought to be this: if you've worked all your life, that you should not retire in poverty. That's a principle that makes sense. We can design a system that supports that concept. And here's the way you do it: It's called progressive indexing. That's a Washington kind of thing, you know. [Laughter] It says that if you're in the—for example, a guy named Pozen, who Tim knows well, came up with this concept. It said that if you're a—poorest 30 percent of the workers, nothing will change in terms of how your benefits increase.

Right now the benefits, by the way, increases are tied to wages. If you're the top 1 percent of workers in terms of income, your benefits would increase by the rate of inflation, not by the rate of wage. Your benefits increase but not as fast as the folks at the bottom end of the spectrum. And if you're in between, depending upon your income, your benefits will increase somewhere between the rate of wage and the rate of price.

Now, incredibly enough, structuring the system this way when it comes to benefit increases will get about—a significant portion of the problem permanently solved. I think it makes sense for Congress to consider this idea. It says you'll get a benefit equal to or greater than the previous generation, that at the very minimum, your benefit will grow at the rate of inflation; if you're poor, your benefit will grow at the rate of wage increases and that you won't retire into poverty.

And there are other things we can do to permanently solve the problem completely. I say permanently solve it because you might remember 1983. Were you in the Congress then, Tim? Yes, first term in the Congress. Tim came together with others—Ronald Reagan was the President; Tip O'Neill was the Speaker. We had a problem in Social Security. They came together and put together what they called a 75-year fix. Here we are 22 years later. The 75-year fix didn't stick for 75 years. It's time to fix this deal once and for all.

And there are some good ideas I put on the table. Let me tell you one other good idea that I want people to think about before we get to our panelists here, folks we're going to be discussing this issue with. And that is that I think that as we permanently solve the system, that we ought to make it a better deal for younger workers by allowing younger workers to take some of their own payroll taxes and set it aside in what is called a voluntary personal savings account.

Notice I said "voluntary." In other words, the Government should say to a younger worker, "If you want to, you can put some of your own money aside. You don't have to. If you're uncomfortable with watching your money grow with a conservative mix of bonds and stocks, you don't have to do that." You can keep it the way—into the system. And you'll get your check. If you're in the bottom 30 percent, your benefits over time will grow with wages. If you're in the top 1 percent, they'll grow with inflation. And if you're somewhere in between, they'll grow depending upon your income but greater than the rate of inflation. Secondly, it's called a personal account. That means you own it. It's an account the Government cannot take away.

So why would we do this? Why would we think of this idea? Well, first of all, with your money—your payroll taxes; after all it's your money—is earning about a 1.8 percent rate of return over time in the Social Security system. You can do better than that. You can do better than that with T-bills, which have very little risk to them, if any at all. You can do a lot better than that in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks. They say that over time you should be able to average at least 4.6 percent.

Now, over a lifetime, that is a significant amount of money relative to the 1.8 percent, because money compounds, money grows. For example, if you're making \$8 an hour and you put your money—and you're allowed to set aside a third of your payroll taxes—\$8 an hour over your life, and you're allowed to set a third of your payroll taxes aside in a personal savings account, and you earn the 4.5 percent rate of return, which is definitely achievable, particularly when you look at the history of a conservative mix of investments,

by the time it comes—you reach retirement age, you'll have earned \$100,000 in your nest egg. That will be a part of your Social Security retirement system. See, you'll get benefits out of the current system, out of the system that's reformed, plus you've got \$100,000 that you call your own.

If you're—say you're a police officer and a nurse, and they enter the workforce in 2011, and you set aside money; and you make the average salary those folks make over time, and you set aside a third of your payroll taxes—both of you do—by the time both retire, they have about \$669,000 in a personal savings account. Money grows over time. The higher the rate of return, the more—the faster your money grows and the more you end up with.

A lot of people are able to understand that. You know why? Because we're into a 401(k) culture. When Penny and I were growing up, we didn't have 401(k)s. The other day I was in an automobile manufacturing plant in Mississippi; I'm sitting with a lot of line workers. I said, "How many of you have got 401(k)s?" A lot of hands went up. A lot of people from different walks of life, different backgrounds, now understand what it means to watch your money grow. This isn't a new concept that's in American society. This is something that's taking place throughout all of society. And I think it makes sense to understand the investor class doesn't belong to a privileged few but the investor class ought to be extended to everybody who lives in America, if that's what you want, if that's what you choose.

I like the idea of somebody saying, "Here's your asset, and you can leave it to whomever you want." And the more people are able to do that in our society, the better off society is. See, I think Government ought to promote an ownership society. We ought to encourage more people to own their own home, encourage entrepreneurs to be able to take risk and own their own business and, in this case, encourage Americans from all walks of life, if they so choose, to manage their own retirement account. And I say "manage it." You know, it's your money. You're going to have some choices to make when it comes to a personal savings account. You can't take it to the lottery, by the way. You notice I've been stressing conservative mix of bonds and

stocks, because we want this account to grow and be a part of a modern safety net for you in your retirement. And so there will be some guidelines.

And I can predict to you that it works because a lot of other people have watched their money grow in the same kind of accounts, including people who work for the Federal Government. See, we have got in Washington what's called a Thrift Savings Plan. And Members of the United States Senate, for example, can choose, if they so desire, to set aside some of their own money in a personal savings account, a voluntary personal savings account. And a lot of people like it.

I think—I was doing one of these events with Senator McCain, who told me that his rate of return on his money was, like, 7 percent over the last 20 years. That's a lot better than the 1.8 percent we now get for you in the Social Security system. And so my attitude about this issue on Thrift Savings Plans when I speak to Members of the Congress is pretty simple. If the idea of taking some of your own money and setting it aside in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks is good enough for you, Mr. Senator, it is good enough for workers all across the United States of America. You'll be happy to hear Senator McCain agrees with me, because he's seen his money grow.

Now, a personal savings account would be a part of a Social Security retirement system. It would be a part of what you would have to retire when you reach retirement age. As you—as I mentioned to you earlier, we're going to redesign the current system. If you've retired, you don't have anything to worry about—third time I've said that. *[Laughter]* I'll probably say it three more times. See, in my line of work you got to keep repeating things over and over and over again for the truth to sink in, to kind of catapult the propaganda.

But if you choose to have one of these accounts—notice I keep saying "if you choose"; the Government is not going to tell you, "You have to do this." I think the Government ought to give you the opportunity to set up one of these accounts. And the account becomes a part of your retirement plan. It's your own asset. It's something you leave to

somebody—whomever you choose. And it makes the system eminently more fair.

Now, with those thoughts in mind, we got a problem, and here's some ideas on how to solve it. I've asked Congressman Tim Penny, right out of the State of Minnesota, a person who's followed this issue a lot. He happens to be of a different political party than I am, but, nevertheless, we both share the common goal of doing our duty as involved citizens to permanently solve the problem of Social Security today.

Welcome, Congressman. Thanks for coming.

*[At this point, former Representative Timothy J. Penny, senior fellow and co-director, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute Policy Forum, made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** Well, thank you, Tim. Good job. Articulate guy, isn't he? Yes. One thing you don't have to worry about is me staying with this effort. This is a vital issue. The American people expect those of us who are fortunate enough to serve in Washington to solve problems. And I've just begun. I like getting out of Washington, to begin with—*[laughter]*—I like explaining the situation. But we're just beginning. If this were easy, it would have been done a while ago. And I fully recognize some in Washington don't particularly want to address this issue. It may be too difficult. And I recognize some of them say, "Well, this is a partisan thing. We don't want to make one party look good as opposed—at the expense of another."

But let me tell you what I think is going to happen. I think—and Tim is right—I think more and more people recognize there's a problem, and people are beginning to say, "Go do something about it." And those who obstruct reform, no matter what party they're in, will pay a political price, in my judgment. People expect us to go to Washington, DC, to work together. That's what they want to see, particularly when it comes to an issue like Social Security.

We've got three members of a fine family here. We've got grandmother, mom, and down there anchoring at the end is grandson or son, isn't that right?

**Audrey Ceglinski.** That's right.

**The President.** Yes. You are Audrey Ceglinski.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** That's right. I'm a 70-year-old widow.

**The President.** Don't ever say your age. *[Laughter]*

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Oh, that's—I have no problem. Don't ask me my weight, though.

**The President.** Okay. *[Laughter]* Reminds me of my mother. *[Laughter]*

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** That's good. I was a teacher aide for Williamsville South High School for 25 years, and I retired from there—a very enjoyable job. I also wanted to mention I'm a volunteer for Meals on Wheels—

**The President.** Oh, fantastic.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** —which I'm missing today. *[Laughter]*

**The President.** I hope somebody filled in.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Oh, yes. We've got some great people there. It's a good group.

**The President.** Thanks for doing that.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** I like it a lot. My husband and I retired 8 years ago. Unfortunately, he passed on after only 2 years, so the money he had invested in Social Security in a sense was gone. Had we had a personal account, I would have had some money for Deb, Jeremy, his brothers, to pass on.

**The President.** Let me stop you there, if you don't mind.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** That's fine. *[Laughter]* You have my permission.

**The President.** Here's the way the system works. Two folks work; they both contribute to the Social Security system; if one dies early, the spouse, the remaining spouse gets to choose her benefits or his benefits, which are ever greater, but not both. Think about that system. Dad went and contributed a lot into the system. He passed away. But the money he put in—most of the money he put in is gone. That's not fair. What kind of system is that? It's not a fair system. It's not fair to the family. It's not fair to the person who has worked all his life, in this case. Had he been able to put money aside in a personal account, that account would have gone to Audrey.

Isn't that right? Keep going. You're on a roll.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Okay. [Laughter] I have five children, seven grandchildren, and that's my concern. I think you making the young people aware that there's a problem is going to make them aware and encourage them to save. And I think that's what we need to do.

**The President.** Well, I appreciate that. Younger people need to pay attention to this issue. See, if nothing gets done in Congress, as Congressman Penny pointed out, you're going to get to pay higher payroll taxes—and higher and higher and higher payroll taxes. And so you need to pay attention. Actually, I believe younger people are beginning to pay closer attention to this issue. We're beginning to get their attention.

First thing is, is there any doubt in your mind that you're going to get your check?

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** I'm getting my check, and it's wonderful.

**The President.** They're still coming.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** It's still coming, and I'm planning on it for a while yet. [Laughter]

**The President.** Well, you need to, yes. Heading toward 80.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** That's right.

**The President.** Right around the corner. You look great.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** You look like 100 to me. That's where you're going to be. Thirty more years?

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** I'll remind you of that. [Laughter]

**The President.** All right, good. And she's going to want her check. On her 99th birthday, she's going to want her check. And you're going to get your check.

Okay, and so who did you bring with you?

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** I brought my daughter, Deborah, the oldest of my five.

**The President.** Debbie or Deborah?

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Debbie. We like to call her Debbie.

**The President.** You called her Deborah.

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Yes.

**The President.** Okay. [Laughter]

**Mrs. Ceglinski.** Only when she's in trouble. And Jeremy, her youngest son.

**The President.** Fantastic. Debbie, welcome.

**Deborah Brown.** Thank you.

**The President.** Thanks for coming. Mom did a good job, didn't she?

**Mrs. Brown.** Yes, she did.

**The President.** So what was it like growing up? Was Mom pretty tough, a disciplinarian?

**Mrs. Brown.** Yes, she was. [Laughter]

**The President.** Well, then you and I share the same thing. [Laughter]

**Mrs. Brown.** Yes, we do.

**The President.** Tell me what's on your mind.

**Mrs. Brown.** Well, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. I was an at-home mom. I was privileged that my husband, who is here today, was willing to let me stay home and raise the kids, work part-time. But when you do that, you don't get to pay into a retirement system anywhere. So I went, got my master's degree. I have a job I'm very happy with now. But I will never be able to build a good retirement in the amount of time I have until I retire. So it's very appealing, the plans that you're talking about, because I'll be quite dependent on Social Security.

**The President.** Yes, set aside a little money, watch it grow at a better rate than the current Social Security system.

**Mrs. Brown.** Exactly, so that—certainly, for Jeremy and for my other three sons, as you said, it would make me happy to know that they're taken care of, too, and that they would have options.

**The President.** Right. And how is old Jeremy doing?

**Jeremy Brown.** I'm doing good. [Laughter]

**The President.** Tell them where you were born.

**Mr. Brown.** Tomball, Texas. [Laughter]

**The President.** Tomball, Texas, right outside of Houston.

**Mr. Brown.** Yes.

**The President.** So you've got Grandmom here; you've got Mom here.

**Mr. Brown.** I've got the brother out in the audience—one of the three is out in the audience, the other grandparents.

**The President.** Good. First of all, what are you doing with yourself these days?

**Mr. Brown.** Well, I'm 18. I'm a sophomore at Canisius College in Buffalo.

**The President.** What's your major?

**Mr. Brown.** I'm dual-majoring in business marketing and business management.

**The President.** Great. All A's?

**Mr. Brown.** Hopefully. [Laughter]

**The President.** Well, don't worry about it. That won't disqualify you from being President.

All right, Jeremy, get going, will you?

**Mr. Brown.** All right, well, being the younger generation, I'm just starting to pay into the system. I like the idea of having these personal accounts, getting a better rate of return in the end, and compound interest and everything so I build up something for myself that I could leave for my future kids and everything. And I like the fact that I'll have something to show for it, because people go and pay decades and decades into Social Security and when it comes time for me to retire, if we don't change, I'll have nothing to show for it.

**The President.** You know what's interesting—I say this a lot when I travel around the country—is that a lot of young people think it's more likely they'll see a UFO than a Social Security check. [Laughter] What do you think, Jeremy?

**Mr. Brown.** I don't know. I'd rather see Social Security change. [Laughter]

**The President.** I didn't ask your preference. [Laughter] But there's a lot of young people who, when they listen to the debate and understand the demographic shift that's going on, don't think they're going to see anything. What kind of system is that where you got a young guy getting ready to graduate from college paying into a—paying a payroll tax, a hefty payroll tax, into a system where he doesn't think he's going to see any benefits from it. It's a system that sounds like to me is screaming for reform, so that somebody who contributes into the system not only knows they're taking care of a baby boomer generation or doing their part for their retirement but also will have something left over for his family, in this case.

What do you want to do when you get out of college?

**Mr. Brown.** Go into real estate.

**The President.** Real estate, yes, good. Sounds like to me you can understand finances pretty well, too, that money can grow over time.

**Mr. Brown.** Yes.

**The President.** Anybody—any other 18-year-olds that you know worried about this issue, thinking about the issue?

**Mr. Brown.** They are now. I got them informed.

**The President.** Yes, you do? That's good. [Laughter] Good job. It's important for people Jeremy's age to start listening to this discussion. As Tim said, the longer we wait, the more difficult it's going to be for an up-and-coming generation.

This is a generational issue, folks. See, the grandmoms and granddads around America now understand they're going to get their check, and so once that comfort level has been provided, the next logical question from many of the grandmothers I've talked to is, "What are you going to do about my grandson? You've said there's a problem, Mr. President, I expect you and the United States Congress to make sure that my grandson has got a viable retirement system." That's what a lot of people are beginning to say around America.

And that's why I can predict that once we get through on this issue, once I finish traveling the country—and I got a lot more to do—people are going to start demanding from their Representatives and their Senators a solution. They don't want any Washington doubletalk. What they want is a solution, so a grandmother can then look at her son, her grandson, Jeremy, and say, "Thankfully, people in Washington did their duty, and I can rest easy knowing I'm going to get my check and Jeremy is going to get his as well." That's the issue.

Good job. You were great.

You two look alike. These are the Weitzel girls, McKenna and Riley, isn't that right? Okay. Which one is Riley? That makes you McKenna.

**McKenna Weitzel.** That's true. [Laughter]

**The President.** They're twins. I'm the father of twins. I am a white-haired father of twins. [Laughter]

**Riley Weitzel.** They can do that to you.

**The President.** Did you do the same thing?

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Yes.

**The President.** Tell me what you all do.

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Well, I'm a history teacher at Bread of Life Christian Academy here in Rochester.

**The President.** Fabulous. Thanks for teaching.

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Yes. I teach history to the fourth through seventh graders there. Hi, guys. I love you, and I miss you, and I'll be there tomorrow. Be good.

**The President.** Taking advantage of C-SPAN. [Laughter]

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** And I am getting married in the summer, in August. And my fiancé and I are just starting to think about retirement and about future generations and, hopefully, if God blesses us with kids, our kids, and something we can pass on down to them. We're really excited about your plan and that we can set up personal accounts and then watch compound interest grow and hopefully get a nest egg and be able to hand that down to our kids.

**The President.** Fantastic. I don't remember thinking about compound interest growing when I was 23. There wasn't a lot of discussion about that type of issue. There's a change; there's a cultural change in America when it comes to investment, because a lot of people are now getting used to the concept of watching their own money grow, isn't that right.

So is fiancé here?

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Yes, he's right over there, Ben.

**The President.** Ben. Look at him, fine-looking lad.

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Thanks. I think so, too.

**The President.** August is the wedding?

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** August 6th. You're invited. [Laughter]

**The President.** That's a smart move. [Laughter] She knows I won't come, but I will send a gift. [Laughter] McKenna going to be in the wedding?

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** McKenna is my maid of honor, of course.

**The President.** Cool. McKenna, what do you do?

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** I'm a hairdresser at the Scott Miller Salon in Pittsford, New York.

**The President.** Great, good.

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Yes, it's a wonderful place to work.

**The President.** A lot of talk about Social Security?

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Not a whole lot there but honestly, I've been thinking about it.

**The President.** Have you? Good.

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Yes, definitely. I feel like there's definitely a problem in the system right now, and things need to change. And I want to say that it's completely commendable of you to stand up and tackle this issue.

**The President.** Oh, thanks. Thank you. That's my job. [Laughter] I appreciate you saying that. There's a lot of others in Washington feel the same way I feel, that there's—they say, "Are you taking a risk?" How can you be taking a risk when you're doing what the people expect, solving problems. I think the people who take the risk are those who won't come to the table to discuss the issue in a way that will help solve the problem.

So are you in agreement with Riley on personal accounts?

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** I certainly do. I feel like being able to take more ownership over your future and over your investments is very wise.

**The President.** Yes. Don't you like the idea—some of you have got 401(k)s, and you open up your statement on a quarterly basis. It seems like to me that would be a healthy thing for our country if more and more people are opening up a statement that says, "This is what you're worth. This is how your worth has grown." It's a—to me, it's a notion of getting people to understand that they've got to pay attention to the future of the country, when you, on a monthly basis, in some cases on a daily basis if you want to get on the Internet and look at your asset base. Now, you're contributing in to the—both of you—payroll tax, aren't you?

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Yes, we both currently are.

**The President.** Pretty good-size chunk?

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** No, not really.

**The President.** No, a pretty good-size chunk of your payroll tax.

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Oh, of course.

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Yes, yes.

**The President.** I think the interesting thing is that when you first talk to people entering into the workplace, their reaction when they first get their checks, what—their reaction to what it's like to not have quite as much money as you expected. That happen to you?

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Yes, that was a shocker. [*Laughter*]

**The President.** Yes, in other words, Government tends to take out a pretty good chunk. And it seems like to me that a significant chunk that is being taken out ought to at least be able to say to young kids, “There’s a reason why. It’s worthwhile for the money to go out, because it will help me in my retirement age.” That’s kind of what we’re talking about, isn’t it?

Okay, now that you’ve got your kids watching, anything else you want to say?

**Ms. Riley Weitzel.** Just, be good today. That’s all.

**The President.** How about you, McKenna? McKenna, you got anything else you need to say?

**Ms. McKenna Weitzel.** Well, I just also want to state that I feel like it’s just encouraging to know that we could collect money in the end, that we aren’t hoping that there will be money there, that it truly will be, and also just the responsibility of knowing that you’re setting aside money and that you will be getting it.

**The President.** See, it’s a little lack of trust right now, it sounds like to me, “Don’t quite trust the Government to have a Social Security system available for my—for the money I put in.” This is a matter of trust. This is a big issue.

I want to thank our panelists for coming to discuss this issue. Very good job.

Washington has a duty to earn the trust of the people by making wise decisions about how the people’s money will be used. We have a chance—both Republicans and Democrats have a chance to come together and to solve the Social Security issue forever. And when we do—and I believe we will, because the people’s voices are going to resonate on this issue—and when we do, all of us who are fortunate enough to serve this country can look back and say, “We did our duty for generations to come.”

Listen, thank you all for coming. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:48 a.m. in the Athena Performing Arts Center at Greece Athena Middle and High School. In his remarks, he referred to Robert C. Pozen, former member, President’s Commission to Strengthen Social Security.

## Remarks on Bioethics

May 24, 2005

Thank you all. Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House.

I have just met with 21 remarkable families. Each of them has answered the call to ensure that our society’s most vulnerable members are protected and defended at every stage of life.

The families here today have either adopted or given up for adoption frozen embryos that remained after fertility treatments. Rather than discard these embryos created during in vitro fertilization or turn them over for research that destroys them, these families have chosen a life-affirming alternative. Twenty-one children here today found a chance for life with loving parents.

I believe America must pursue the tremendous possibilities of science, and I believe we can do so while still fostering and encouraging respect for human life in all its stages. In the complex debate over embryonic stem cell research, we must remember that real human lives are involved—both the lives of those with diseases that might find cures from this research and the lives of the embryos that will be destroyed in the process. The children here today are reminders that every human life is a precious gift of matchless value.

I appreciate Mike Leavitt, Department of Health and Human Services, for being here. He’s the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. I picked a really good man to take on this assignment. He’s doing a fine job.

I want to thank the executive director of Nightlight Christian Adoptions, Ron Stoddart, for joining us today. Welcome. I want to thank Lori Maze, the director of

Snowflakes Frozen Embryo Adoption Program. Welcome, Lori. Thank you for coming. And thank you all for being here.

The rapid advance of science presents us with the hope of eventual cures for terrible diseases and with profound moral and ethical dilemmas. The decisions we make today will have far-reaching consequences, so we must aggressively move forward with medical research while also maintaining the highest ethical standards.

Research on stem cells derived from human embryos may offer great promise, but the way those cells are derived today destroys the embryo. I share the hope of millions of Americans who desperately want to find treatments and cures for terrible diseases such as juvenile diabetes and Parkinson's disease. That is why my administration completing—completed the doubling of the NIH budget to \$29 billion a year, to encourage research. I also made available for the first time Federal funds for embryonic stem cell research in order to explore the potential of these cells.

But I also recognize the grave moral issues at stake. So in August 2000—first—2001, I set forward a policy to advance stem cell research in a responsible way by funding research on stem cell lines derived only from embryos that had already been destroyed. This policy set a clear standard: We should not use public money to support the further destruction of human life.

Under this policy, we have supported a great deal of ethical research. About 600 shipments of eligible stem cell lines are already being used by researchers across the country, and over 3,000 more shipments are still available. We've increased funding for all forms of stem cell research by more than 80 percent since I took office. A tremendous amount of both public and private research is underway in America on embryonic as well as adult stem cells and stem cells from umbilical cord blood.

Today the House of Representatives is considering a bill that violates the clear standard I set 4 years ago. This bill would take us across a critical ethical line by creating new incentives for the ongoing destruction of emerging human life. Crossing this line would be a great mistake.

Even now, researchers are exploring alternative sources of stem cells, such as adult bone marrow and umbilical cord blood as well as different ethical ways of getting the same kind of cells now taken from embryos, without violating human life or dignity. With the right policies and the right techniques, we can pursue scientific progress while still fulfilling our moral duties.

I want to thank Nightlight Christian Adoptions for their good work. Nightlight's embryo adoption program has now matched over 200 biological parents with about 140 adoptive families, resulting in the birth of 81 children so far, with more on the way.

The children here today remind us that there is no such thing as a spare embryo. Every embryo is unique and genetically complete, like every other human being. And each of us started out our life this way. These lives are not raw material to be exploited, but gifts. And I commend each of the families here today for accepting the gift of these children and offering them the gift of your love.

Thank you for coming today. By the way, we're having a little birthday gathering just in a second for Tanner and Noelle. You all are invited to partake in a little birthday cake. *[Laughter]* In the meantime, may God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to birthday guests Tanner Brinkman and Noelle Faulk.

### **Remarks With Judge Priscilla R. Owen on Senate Action To Allow Votes on Judicial Nominations**

*May 24, 2005*

**The President.** I'm proud to welcome Judge Priscilla Owen to the Oval Office, along with Leader Frist and my two buddies from the great State of Texas, Senator Hutchison and Senator Cornyn.

Over 4 years ago, I put Judge Owen's name up to the Senate for confirmation to the 5th Court of Appeals. Thanks to the good work of the leader, whose work cleared the way, Judge Owen is finally going to get an

up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. She is my friend, and more importantly, she's a great judge.

I want to thank the Texas Senators who have been so strong standing beside Priscilla. There was never any doubt in the Senators' minds that Priscilla Owen is well-qualified to honorably serve on the Federal bench. And it's such a—it's a great day for our friend, to see our friend finally get a just due, after a long, long wait.

So, welcome and congratulations. Perhaps you'd like to say something.

[At this point, Judge Owen made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:51 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Judge Owen.

### Remarks Following a Tour of a Hydrogen Fueling Station and an Exchange With Reporters

May 25, 2005

**The President.** This is the beginning of some fantastic technology. And thanks for having us out here. We're going to look at some other vehicles here in a minute, but hydrogen is the wave of the future. And this country is going to have to use technology to diversify away from hydrocarbons. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy today. And one way to diversify away from hydrocarbons is to use hydrogen, the byproduct of which will be water and not exhausts which pollute the air.

So I'm excited to be part of a technological revolution that's going to change the country. It won't happen overnight. It's going to take a fair amount of research and development to make sure hydrogen is attractive and reasonable—is able to be manufactured at a reasonable price, distributed in a wide way for consumer satisfaction.

But it's coming. We're spending about \$1.2 billion on hydrogen research. America leads the world in hydrogen research. It's a part of our efforts to help diversify away from hydrocarbons. And the problem we face

today at the gas pump is we're too dependent on foreign sources of energy.

So thanks for showing us this. It's exciting. It's the early stages of what will be available to a lot of Americans. Thank you.

### Energy Legislation

**Q.** How is the energy bill coming?

**The President.** Energy bill? What was your question?

**Q.** How is the energy bill coming along?

**The President.** Yes, working hard in the Senate to get a good energy bill out—they need to get it to my desk. I appreciate you asking about the energy bill. Part of the hydrogen initiative and part of the diversification away from hydrocarbons is a part of an energy bill. And Congress has been talking too long about the energy bill, and now is the time to get it to my desk.

And so we're working with the Senators. Senator Domenici is intent upon getting an energy bill out. Once they get it out of the Senate, they've got to work out their differences with the House. And I think the American people are tired of waiting; I know they are. And I submitted a plan to the Congress 4 years ago, and I'm getting a little tired of waiting on an energy bill. For the sake of energy independence, they've got to get me a bill.

And it's a comprehensive bill. It talks about encouraging conservation, environmentally friendly ways to explore for hydrocarbons, money to diversify away from the hydrocarbon economy we live in, and ways to modernize the electricity grid. I'm hopeful they'll get it done, but we're going to push hard to make sure they do.

Thank you.

**Q.** Did you sign any bills yesterday? Do you sense a new bipartisanship?

**The President.** We'll see. It's all going to be in the results. I'm a results-oriented person. I want to see the bill to my desk. That's the definition of people committing themselves to get something done. The American people expect them to get something done. I do, too, because we're too dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Go ahead, what was your question?

### **Hydrogen Fuel**

**Q.** How much did you fill up with, and how much did it cost?

**Rick Scott.** Yes, sir, we filled up .183 kilograms, because it's a gas. And now the cost factor—right now it's a demonstration mode, so when it rains, I jack up the cost, and when it's sunny, I bring it back down. [Laughter] Today with the—

**The President.** How is—what is the—what he really wants to know is the equivalency.

**Mr. Scott.** Right now the cost is \$4.75, and what we're looking at is—

**The President.** But what's the equivalency to the normal tank—

**Mr. Scott.** It's twice as much as premium because the car is two times more efficient in its energy, and it's a quality fuel.

**The President.** It's also the beginning of technology. In other words, a new product generally is more expensive until there's more volume and more distribution. Part of the reasons we're spending money is to see if we can't encourage technology to enable the industry to extract hydrocarbon at more reasonable—I mean, hydrogen at more reasonable price.

A couple of bottlenecks, it seems like to me—and you can help me out here. One, obviously, is the manufacturing of vehicles that use hydrogen. Secondly, it is the ability to produce hydrogen. It requires energy to produce hydrogen, and therefore, we're trying to use our research dollars to figure out how best to do that in efficient ways. And, finally, to make sure that the infrastructure is such that consumers can buy hydrogen in a convenient way.

But we've got work to do. No one thinks this technology is going to overwhelm our society in the immediate term. This is a 10-year project, as I—when I announced it to the United States Congress. The key is, is that we're now putting things in place today, making investments today, encouraging development of alternative sources of energy today, that will help transform our energy mix for tomorrow so that 10 years from now, hopefully, we can look back and say, "Thankfully, Congress finally acted and President Bush led, so that we're able to diversify away from oil and gas." And we need to do it for

the sake of our energy security and national security.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. at the Shell Service Station at 3355 Benning Rd., NE, in Washington, DC. Participating in the tour was Rick Scott, operations coordinator, Shell Hydrogen, LLC.

### **Remarks Following Discussions With President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia and an Exchange With Reporters May 25, 2005**

**President Bush.** Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. It's an honor to meet with you again. Last time I was with you, I congratulated you on winning a hard-fought Presidential campaign. Now I had a chance to congratulate you on fulfilling your campaign promises. I want to thank you for your impressive record.

I also want to thank you for the strength and the leadership you showed during what must have been an incredibly difficult period for the government and the people of Indonesia during the catastrophe after the tsunami. You showed good—great courage. And it's been an honor to work with you to help save lives and to bring people order out of the chaos that ensued after the terrible disaster.

We had a very good conversation today. We talked about a variety of subjects, all aimed about making our countries more peaceful and more prosperous and the world more peaceful. Indonesia will play a large role and a significant role in helping us understand that great religions should coexist in a peaceful way.

Mr. President, thank you for coming, and welcome to the Oval Office.

**President Yudhoyono.** Mr. President, I'm also pleased to have the opportunity to meet you again, after we met in Chile during the APEC meeting.

As I have said during this meeting, that I do hope that our cooperation can be strengthened from time to time. And as we discussed on many subjects—the education, the economic cooperations, the

counterterrorism, regional situation, and others—I extremely hope that Indonesia can continue its reforms, democratizations, and economic reconstruction. And I do hope that you could maintain your contribution and support to us in continuing our reforms and democratizations.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir. We'll answer two questions a side. We'll start with the American person, Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

#### **Bioethics/Stem Cell Research**

**Q.** Thank you, sir. With 400,000 frozen embryos in this country unlikely to all get adopted, why do you think that either storing them or even discarding them is better than using them for research?

**President Bush.** She's asking about a very delicate subject called embryonic stem cell research. I have made my position very clear on that issue. I believe that the use of Federal monies that end up destroying life is not—is not positive, is not good. And so, therefore, I'm against the extension of the research of using more Federal dollars on new embryonic stem cell lines.

As you know, I made the decision that existing lines should receive Federal dollars, and we've had about 600 different experiments, maybe 3,000 more to go. And so you asked about frozen embryos—that would entail the destruction of life, and the use of Federal dollars to destroy life is something I simply do not support.

#### **Indonesia-U.S. Military Relations**

**Q.** How about good will for relation of our military?

**President Yudhoyono.** Yes, we discussed with President Bush on the effort in normalizing our military-to-military relations. Of course Indonesia has to be thankful for the resumption of IMET program. And we have to do more along with the reforms of the military that is conducted in Indonesia. I do hope that in the future we are moving ahead for fully normalizations of the military-to-military relations.

Actually, the atmosphere is positive that of course in part of Indonesia, we have to continue our reform to many things—toward

the normalization of our military-to-military relations.

**President Bush.** The President did mention that we're revitalizing the military education training program. It makes sense that we have mil-to-mil exchanges, military-to-military exchanges. We want young officers from Indonesia coming to the United States. We want there to be exchanges between our military corps. That will help lead to better understandings. And so I—the President told me he's in the process of reforming the military, and I believe him. So this is the first step toward what will be fuller mil-to-mil cooperation.

Cameron [Carl Cameron, Fox News].

#### **Bioethics/Stem Cell Research**

**Q.** Again on stem cells, Mr. President. If I understood you correctly, the embryos put together for in vitro fertilization do contain life. And if that's the case, do you believe that those people who create those embryos for in vitro fertilization have an obligation to ensure that they are brought to term, if they are, in fact, not needed by the original—

**President Bush.** No, the issue that involves the Federal Government is whether or not we use taxpayers' money that would end up destroying that life. That's the issue at hand. And as you know, I'm the first President to say we could use Federal dollars on embryonic stem cells, but those stem cells had already—had been created, so that—it's from the moment I made the declaration forward that we would not use Federal taxpayers' money to destroy life. That's the issue. And the Congress has made its position clear, and I've made my position clear. And I will be vetoing the bill they send to me if it were to pass the United States Senate.

Now, there is research going on in the private sector. There's a lot of research on adult stem cells that appears to be very promising. And my Government strongly supports stem cells. There must be a balance—strongly supports adult stem cell research—but there must be a balance between science and ethics. And I've made my decision as to how best achieve that balance.

### ***Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis Disaster Relief***

**Q.** We understand that United States has pledged a commitment—a lot have pledged a commitment to the tsunami relief reconstruction and effort. I would like to ask, how is it going to be realized, the commitment?

**President Bush.** Well, the commitment was first realized when we moved an aircraft carrier with a lot of equipment into the neighborhood. And many of our Navy officers and Marine officers and Marine enlisted, Navy enlisted personnel were the first people on the ground to start helping in coordination with the Indonesian Government.

That commitment is further being met by expenditures out of the United States Congress. Plus, I put together kind of an interesting group of private citizens to help raise money for the tsunami relief—that would be my father and President Clinton, number 41 and 42. And they have worked hard to convince our fellow citizens to contribute—these are private-sector citizens—to contribute to help provide relief as well. I'm proud of my Government's—more importantly, my country's commitment to help the people who suffer.

And the President and I talked a lot about the ongoing relief efforts. We thanked the Government for their hard work, and I told him the American people will stand with these folks.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:36 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

### **Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Indonesia**

*May 25, 2005*

President George W. Bush and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono today reaffirmed the longstanding friendship between the United States of America and the Republic of Indonesia and committed to expand and deepen their cooperation based on partnership and our shared values of democracy and pluralism. The two leaders held productive

discussions on issues of mutual concern at the bilateral, regional, and global levels.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono exchanged congratulations on the successful conduct of their respective elections last year. President Bush applauded Indonesia's enormous strides in building a durable democracy and noted that these successes truly reflect the determination and democratic spirit of the Indonesian people. Mindful of the importance of rule of law in building democracy and prosperity, the two Presidents agreed to establish a joint interagency working group to share experience and enhance cooperation on various justice-sector issues and related issues of mutual interest.

On behalf of the American people, President Bush once again expressed his sympathy to the Indonesian people and their government over the catastrophic loss of life and the material destruction caused by recent earthquakes and the December 2004 tsunami. He reiterated the commitment of the American people to stand by those affected as they rebuild, and he announced that Indonesia will receive \$400 million of the total \$857 million earmarked by the U.S. Government for earthquake and tsunami relief and reconstruction. The United States has offered to rebuild the Banda Aceh-Meulaboh highway—a 240-kilometer road with over 110 bridges that serves as a lifeline for much of the west coast of Aceh province—setting aside \$245 million for the effort. The United States will also work with local and national authorities to rebuild homes, schools, and clinics and re-establish the means for the people of Aceh to return to work. The two Presidents pledged to work together to develop a Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Action Plan to increase Indonesia's capacity to respond to disasters of all kind. While stressing that the primary responsibility for dealing with the tsunami disaster and its consequences lies with the government and people of Indonesia, President Yudhoyono expressed deep appreciation for the outpouring of sympathy and generous financial assistance from the government of the United States and private American citizens. Recognizing the achievement of private U.S. citizens and companies in raising more than \$1.4

billion for relief and reconstruction of the affected areas, the two Presidents welcomed the outcome of the Private Sector Summit held in Washington, D.C., on 12 May 2005. They commended the efforts of the private sector, led by former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton, in generating such generous contributions for the tsunami victims.

President Bush emphasized his government's support for Indonesia's territorial integrity and reiterated that the United States opposes secessionist movements in any part of Indonesia. He noted that a strong, united, democratic, and prosperous Indonesia will serve as a force for stability and progress in Asia and beyond. The President noted that reconstruction offers the opportunity for a new beginning in Aceh and gave his full support for President Yudhoyono's strong efforts to promote peace. He welcomed the ongoing talks to achieve a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict, based on special autonomy within the framework of a united Indonesia.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono underscored their strong commitment to fight terrorism, which threatens the people of both nations and undermines international peace and security. The two leaders rejected any link between terrorism and religion and pledged to continue to work closely at the bilateral, regional, and global levels to combat terror.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono endorsed cultural and educational exchange visits and interfaith dialogue as means for promoting tolerance, mutual respect and mutual understanding. The two Presidents pledged to work together to support such initiatives. President Bush welcomed President Yudhoyono's intention to send prominent Indonesian Islamic scholars to the United States to promote inter-faith dialogue.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono agreed that normal military relations would be in the interest of both countries and undertook to continue working toward that objective. The two Presidents welcomed the resumption of Indonesia's participation in International Military Education and Training (IMET) as an important step. They also looked forward to the convening of the Third

Indonesia-United States Security Dialogue in Jakarta in mid-2005 and called for further meetings of the Bilateral Defense Dialogue. They also praised the excellent humanitarian cooperation between the U.S. military and the Indonesian military during the tsunami emergency relief operations in Aceh. President Yudhoyono reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthen military reform, civilian control, and accountability. President Bush pledged his full support in these efforts. Encouraged by progress in the investigation of the 2002 incident in Timika, President Yudhoyono reaffirmed that he would intensify efforts to ensure that the suspect indicted by a U.S. Federal court for the 2002 Timika killings is apprehended and that all those responsible for these crimes are brought to justice.

The two Presidents discussed ways to strengthen U.S.-Indonesia economic cooperation and trade relations. President Yudhoyono briefed President Bush on his approach to Indonesia's development, which he termed "pro-growth, pro-job, and pro-poor." He also noted the urgent need to improve Indonesia's infrastructure and he invited Americans to participate in that undertaking. President Bush welcomed President Yudhoyono's determination to further economic reform, to combat corruption, and to improve the business and investment climate. Accordingly, the Presidents welcomed the \$10 million G-8 pilot project to assist Indonesia in its efforts to improve the business climate. Stressing the benefits of an open trading system, the two Presidents welcomed the resumption of Trade and Investment Council (TIC) talks, after a five-year hiatus, under the U.S.-Indonesia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The two Presidents encouraged their delegations to continue to make further progress in resolving outstanding trade issues, with the aim of broadening and deepening our economic relationship.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono discussed the state of the world's energy situation and stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation and investment in the field of energy. To this end, they announced the resumption of bilateral energy consultations, the first round of which will

be held on May 26, 2005, in Washington after an eight-year hiatus, and called on participants to report back on progress to the two Presidents before the APEC summit meeting later this year.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono reaffirmed the importance of education in U.S.-Indonesia relations and agreed to continue placing a high priority on cooperation in this field. President Yudhoyono recalled with appreciation President Bush's initiative during his visit to Bali in October 2003 to provide US\$157 million to fund a six-year program designed to strengthen Indonesia's basic education capacity. The two leaders hailed the initial success of this program in enriching the educational experience of Indonesian children. They also agreed to expand opportunities and improve the quality of higher education for Indonesian students, including by increasing the number of Indonesian students studying in the United States.

President Bush and President Yudhoyono exchanged views on international developments, particularly those in the Asia-Pacific region. President Bush expressed appreciation for Indonesia's role in strengthening the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and for efforts to achieve an ASEAN Security Community. The two Presidents exchanged views on Iraq and on prospects for peace in the Middle East, and they expressed support for two democratic states living side by side in peace and security. President Bush welcomed the intention of President Yudhoyono to help promote peace in the Middle East. President Bush congratulated President Yudhoyono on the successful convening of the Second Asian-African Summit in Jakarta, 23–24 April 2004.

The two Presidents welcomed the development in the Asia-Pacific region of an open and inclusive institutional architecture that reinforces peace and stability and contributes to economic development and prosperity. They welcomed the contributions of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in supporting trade and investment liberalization and for its cooperative efforts to combat threats to regional security. The two leaders underlined the importance of multilateral cooperation and, in this context,

agreed on the need to pursue reform of the United Nations as a means to improving its effectiveness.

The two leaders affirmed that the United States of America and Indonesia, two of the world's largest democracies, are bound by an abiding friendship and a common appreciation of diversity, tolerance, and freedom as a source of enduring strength.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

### **Remarks With President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia on the Observance of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month**

*May 25, 2005*

**President Bush.** Thank you for coming. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. I am glad you're here. I'm proud to be with you to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. And we are joined by a very special guest, a close friend of America, a man with whom I just had a very good visit, President Yudhoyono from Indonesia. Welcome, Mr. President.

Before we award our volunteer of the year awards, the President has graciously offered to give some remarks. And, unfortunately, I'm going to give some too. [*Laughter*] Before I begin I do want to introduce Agus and Edhie, the President's sons. Welcome. We're glad you're here. Agus will be getting married on July the 8th.

This is a time to celebrate the achievement of millions of Americans of Asian Pacific ancestry. Today, Asian Pacific Americans are making their mark in all walks of life, including business and politics and education and community service and the arts and science.

I'm fortunate to have many Asian American in my Cabinet and in my administration, two of whom are here with us today. I want to thank the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, for joining us, and the Secretary of Transportation, Norm Mineta.

Andrew Natsios of USAID is here. Andrew, it's good you're here, because we're going to be talking about tsunami relief in a minute.

I want to thank Betty Wu, who is the Chairman of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders. I want to thank all the Commission members who are here today.

I want to thank my friend Ambassador Sichan Siv from the United Nations. Where is he? Where is Sichan? There he is. Welcome, Sichan. You did a fine job. I'm glad Martha is here.

Delegate Eni from Samoa, thank you for coming, sir. Proud you're here. Is Lisa here? Senator Murkowski just came in from the State of Alaska. Proud you're here.

I see we got a lot of members of the diplomatic corps who are here. Welcome, Ambassadors. Thank you for coming. Proud you're here.

And again, Mr. President, thank you for joining us as we celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month.

Indonesia and America may be on the opposite sides of the ocean, but we have a lot in common. We are both among the world's largest democracies. We both share a belief that our great diversity is a source of strength. And when the tsunami hit, citizens from both our countries took it upon themselves to come to the aid of those in distress.

The tsunami that began in the Indian Ocean struck Indonesia just 2 months after the President came into office. I understand that when the tsunami hit, His Excellency was in a remote province of his country. And the moment he heard what happened, he rushed to the scene. He didn't hesitate. He rushed to not only help but to make a personal assessment of what needed to be done. After declaring a national emergency, he moved quickly to clear away the bureaucratic obstacles and visa requirements so that the path would be clear for international relief workers.

By acting with skill and courage, Mr. President, you helped bring your country together in a time of great crisis. And thank you for that kind of leadership.

And the people of Indonesia responded in kind. Religious organizations and businesspeople and the Indonesian Red Cross and thousands of ordinary citizens traveled at their own expense to the hard-hit

province of Aceh to pitch in, to do their duty as a citizen of a free democracy.

And the need was great. More than 125,000 Indonesians have been confirmed dead. Think about that. Another 37,000 are missing. More than half a million have been forced from their homes. Your fellow citizens provided first aid, and you helped evacuate victims and distributed relief supplies. And it was a good example of how government and individuals work together.

But it was also important for the world to respond. And I'm proud of the response of the United States Government and her people. Our United States military was on the scene with an aircraft carrier. And we had sailors and marines working around the clock to show the people of your part of the world that our hearts are big, that we care about people from all walks of life, that the compassion of America runs deep and strong.

Shortly after the disaster struck, the United States pledged \$350 million in aid for the region. Providing relief, our country has really, I hope, showed that we're a friend when you've got a problem. But a friend doesn't quit when a problem persists. And so earlier this month, Congress approved my request for additional tsunami relief and reconstruction help, bringing total U.S. aid to more than \$850 million.

The people of your country need to know and the people of the countries affected by the tsunami relief need to know that when America gives a pledge to help, we'll keep our word, and that when America says that we stand with you, we mean it. So, Mr. President, please take this message back to the people of Indonesia.

Finally, I'm proud that volunteers from our Asian Pacific American community were among those who stepped forward to help the victims of the tsunami relief—of the tsunami. Their efforts ranged from serving on humanitarian missions to raising money to rebuilding an orphanage. Americans from all over our country, from all walks of life, used their time and talents and compassion to make a difference. Heck, I even called on two former Presidents—[laughter]—41 and 42—[laughter]—Bush and Clinton—[laughter]—to join together to send a message that we're not talking politics; we're talking about

helping people get their feet back on the ground—get their feet back on the ground. We're talking about helping to save lives. That's the American spirit, Mr. President. That's how we like to do things in this country.

And today we've gathered to honor some of our fellow citizens with volunteer service awards. People from the Asian Pacific community have heard the call to serve something greater than themselves. And before we present those awards, however, Mr. President, I'm honored to welcome you to the White House and welcome you to the podium so that you can deliver a few remarks.

Please welcome the President.

**President Yudhoyono.** President Bush, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to join you here today. I stand before you here to deliver a message of thanks from a grateful nation halfway around the world.

My country, Indonesia, suffered most from the horrible tsunami last December. Some 200,000 people were killed in a matter of minutes, and over 500,000 survivors lost their homes.

When I arrived in Aceh the day after the tsunami, almost everything close to the sea had been destroyed, flattened to the ground, swept by the waves. Nothing had ever prepared us for something like this—nothing. It was under these circumstances that we experienced an incredible display of global solidarity immediately after the tsunami, and it was during this desperate time that American servicemen came and helped.

The USS *Abraham Lincoln* arrived with its much-needed helicopters to help deliver food and supplies to survivors that could not be reached by land. And USS hospital ship *Mercy* provided medical care to the injured and the sick, at a time when we were all worried that more people would die from diseases than from the tsunami.

I remember my heart almost sank one day when I heard that a U.S. Seahawk helicopter had crashed. But I was glad to hear directly from Ambassador Lynn Pascoe that the crews were all right, even though their Seahawk had to make an emergency landing on a paddy field. And not surprisingly, the

crews were itching to get back into action to save lives.

America has every reason to be proud for what your Government, your heroism, and your volunteers have done for the tsunami victims. This was a time for valor and selfless sacrifice. The tsunami produced a lot of heroes, heroes who saved lives, heroes who gave hope to those who are suffering. And Americans were among these heroes. You all should be proud of that.

The funds that have been collected from millions of Americans will be very helpful to help the Acehnese rebuild their lives. But I want you to know what really mattered was that they all came from the heart. What really mattered was that each of you reached not so much into your pocket as into the new depth of your conscience, compassion, and solidarity. What really mattered was that you saw the pain of others and tried to help. And with all our tears, words, and deeds, what we all did together was to prove that the greatest wrath of nature was no match for the greater force that is the human spirit.

I said something earlier about reaching out. Let me read you a letter from Maggie, a third-grader from K-4 Elementary in Charlevoix, Michigan, which, through some good fortune, I managed to obtain from AmeriCorps. Maggie was writing to a tsunami kid she did not know. This is what Maggie wrote: "Dear friends: Hi. My name is Maggie. I am sorry what happened in your country. I have heard some things about it. I hope your family and friends are okay. In church, I pray for you and your country. In school, we are raising money for your country. We have a loose-change bucket, and kids bring money in. Also, we are making tsunami bracelet to raise money, too. I have made you one. I hope you like it. I will continue praying for you and your country in church. Your friend, Maggie."

I faxed Maggie's letter to Aceh, to be passed on to an Acehnese youngster. And a few days later, I received a response letter from Nada Lutfiah, a young girl from Banda Aceh. That is what Nada looks like.

**President Bush.** There's your picture. Is this her?

**President Yudhoyono.** Yes, sorry. This is her. [Laughter] Nada looks like—[applause].

Nada Lutfiah. Nada wrote to Maggie, and I translate into English. “My good friend: Hello, friend. My name is Nada Lutfiah. I was so happy and my heart was touched to receive the letter you sent us. My family, my dad, mom, older brother, and younger brother have disappeared, and now I live with my cousins. I hope you are healthy and well where you are. I am so glad you are paying attention to us here. I hope to receive your bracelet in the coming days, because I want to wear it on my arm to remind me that I have new friend. Your friend, Nada.”

I have asked my Ambassador Soemadi to personally deliver Nada’s letter and photo to Maggie in Michigan.

These two letters are extraordinary, both in the words they conveyed and in the fact that two youngsters from entirely different background made a connection: An American girl who prays at church, collects loose change, and make bracelet for tsunami kids two oceans away; an Indonesian Muslim girl who lost all her family and wants to kill the pain and is eager just to be a kid again, just like Maggie. I think the world will be a better place if all of us start to have connections and conversation the way Maggie and Nada did.

I thank you very much.

**President Bush.** Mr. President, thank you very much for such a powerful speech. And it’s in that spirit of compassion that we—it’s my honor to now award the volunteer awards.

Commander, please read the citations.

*[At this point, Lt. Col. Steven T. Fisher, USA, Army Aide to the President, read the citations, and the awards were presented.]*

**President Bush.** Mr. President, I hope you can tell by the short presentation of—to some of our great citizens that the true strength of America, our true strength lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens.

I’m proud that you’ve joined us today. Thank you all for coming. May God bless our respective countries, and may God continue to bless the American people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Sichan Siv, U.S. Representative to the U.N. Economic and Social

Council, and his wife, Martha; and Eni Faleomavaega, American Samoa’s Representative to the U.S. Congress. President Yudhoyono referred to U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia B. Lynn Pascoe; and Indonesia’s Ambassador to the U.S. Soemadi Brotodiningrat.

### **Statement on Senate Confirmation of Priscilla R. Owen as U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit**

*May 25, 2005*

I applaud the Senate for voting to confirm Justice Priscilla Owen. She has served with distinction on the Supreme Court of Texas, has demonstrated that she strictly interprets the law, and brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. I urge the Senate to build on this progress and provide my judicial nominees the up-or-down votes they deserve.

### **Proclamation 7906—National Homeownership Month, 2005**

*May 25, 2005*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

For millions of individuals and families, the American Dream starts with owning a home. When families move into a home of their own, they gain independence and confidence, and their faith in the future grows. The spread of ownership and opportunity helps give our citizens a vital stake in the future of America and the chance to realize the great promise of our country.

From the earliest days of our Nation, homeownership has embodied the core American values of individual freedom, personal responsibility, and self-reliance. A home provides children with a safe environment in which to grow and learn. A home is also a tangible asset that provides owners with borrowing power and allows our citizens to build wealth that they can pass on to their children and grandchildren.

The benefits of homeownership extend to our communities. Families who own their

own homes have a strong interest in maintaining the value of their investments, the safety of their neighborhoods, and the quality of their schools. Homeownership is also a bedrock of the American economy, helping to increase jobs, boost demand for goods and services, and build prosperity.

More Americans than ever own their own homes, but we must continue to work hard so that every family has an opportunity to realize the American Dream. In 2002, I announced a goal to add 5.5 million new minority homeowners by the end of the decade. Since then, we have added 2.3 million new minority households. My Administration has also set a goal of adding 7 million new affordable homes to the market within the next 10 years. In my FY 2006 budget, I proposed a single family housing tax credit and two mortgage programs—the Zero Downpayment mortgage and the Payment Incentives program—to help more families achieve homeownership. In 2003, I signed the American Dream Downpayment Act, and I have proposed more than \$200 million to continue the American Dream Downpayment Initiative to provide downpayment assistance to thousands of American families. By promoting initiatives such as financial literacy, tax incentives for building affordable homes, voucher programs, and Individual Development Accounts, we are strengthening our communities and improving citizens' lives.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2005 as National Homeownership Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities recognizing the importance of homeownership.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 27, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 31.

### **The President's News Conference With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority**

*May 26, 2005*

**President Bush.** Thank you. Mr. President, it is my honor to welcome the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people to the White House.

We meet at a time when a great achievement of history is within reach, the creation of a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state. President Abbas is seeking that goal by rejecting violence and working for democratic reform. I believe the Palestinian people are fully capable of justly governing themselves in peace with their neighbors. I believe the interests of the Israeli people would be served by a peaceful Palestinian state. And I believe that now is the time for all parties of this conflict to move beyond old grievances and act forcefully in the cause of peace.

President Abbas's election 4 months ago was a tribute to the power and appeal of democracy and an inspiration to the people across the region. Palestinians voted against violence and for sovereignty, because only the defeat of violence will lead to sovereignty.

Mr. President, the United States and the international community applaud your rejection of terrorism. All who engage in terror are the enemies of a Palestinian state and must be held to account. We will stand with you, Mr. President, as you combat corruption, reform the Palestinian security services and your justice system, and revive your economy. Mr. President, you have made a new start on a difficult journey requiring courage and leadership each day, and we will take that journey together.

As we work for peace, other countries must step up to their responsibilities. Arab states must take concrete measures to create a regional environment conducive to peace. They must offer financial assistance to support the peaceful efforts of President Abbas, his Government, and the Palestinian people. And they must refuse to assist or harbor terrorists.

Israel must continue to take steps toward a peaceful future and work with the Palestinian leadership to improve the daily lives of Palestinians, especially their humanitarian situation. Israel should not undertake any activity that contravenes roadmap obligations or prejudice final status negotiations with regard to Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem.

Therefore, Israel must remove unauthorized outposts and stop settlement expansion. The barrier being erected by Israel as a part of its security effort must be a security, rather than political, barrier. And its route should take into account, consistent with security needs, its impact on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities. As we make progress toward security and in accordance with the roadmap, Israeli forces should withdraw to their positions on September the 28th, 2000.

Any final status agreement must be reached between the two parties, and changes to the 1949 Armistice Lines must be mutually agreed to. A viable two-state solution must ensure contiguity on the West Bank, and a state of scattered territories will not work. There must also be meaningful linkages between the West Bank and Gaza. This is the position of the United States today; it will be the position of the United States at the time of final status negotiations.

The imminent Israeli disengagement from Gaza, parts of the West Bank, presents an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a return to the roadmap. All parties have a responsibility to make this hopeful moment in the region a new and peaceful beginning. That is why I assigned General Kip Ward, who is with us today, to support your efforts, Mr. President, to reform the Palestinian security services and to coordinate the efforts of the international community to make that crucial task a success. The United States also strongly supports the mission of the Quartet's special envoy, Jim Wolfensohn, to make sure that the Gaza disengagement brings Palestinians a better life.

To help ensure that the Gaza disengagement is a success, the United States will provide to the Palestinian Authority \$50 million to be used for new housing and infrastructure projects in the Gaza. These funds will be used to improve the quality of life of the Palestinians living in Gaza, where poverty and

unemployment are very high. I've also asked Secretary Rice to travel to Jerusalem and Ramallah before the beginning of the Israeli withdrawal. Secretary Rice will consult with Israelis and Palestinians on the disengagement, their shared commitments, and the way back on the roadmap.

As we work to make the disengagement succeed, we must not lose sight of the path ahead. The United States remains committed to the roadmap as the only way to realize the vision of two democratic states living side by side in peace and security. It is through the roadmap that the parties can achieve a final permanent status agreement through direct negotiations.

The people of the Middle East have endured a long period of challenge, and now we have reached a moment of hope. Leaders from around the world have made a moral commitment: We will not stand by as another generation in the Holy Land grows up in an atmosphere of violence and hopelessness. With concrete actions by the United States, the Palestinians, Israel, and other nations, we can transform this opportunity into real momentum.

Mr. President, we will work with you to help realize the dream of a free and democratic Palestine, to bring greater freedom, security, and prosperity to all peoples in the region, and to achieve the lasting peace we all seek.

Welcome back to the White House.

**President Abbas.** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'd like to thank you for this warm welcome and express my view in order to strengthen the relationship between Palestine and the United States. The Palestinian people share with the American people the same values of peace, freedom, and democracy. We are confident that the two peoples will benefit from continuing and developing this relationship.

Today we have conducted very intensive and constructive discussions with you, Mr. President, and with your senior administration officials. We discussed ways to support the opportunities to revive and resume the peace process in the Middle East. These discussions afford us with the opportunity to emphasize the central and essential role played by you, Mr. President, and by your

administration in supporting and advancing the peace process toward the realization of your vision of ending the Israeli occupation that started in 1967 and the establishment of a democratic, free, and independent Palestine to live side by side with the state of Israel, in order to create a better future for the peoples of the region. We have reiterated again to you, Mr. President, our strong commitment to the peace option, and through negotiations, we can achieve—the two sides can achieve their objectives.

We also discussed the efforts that have been undertaken by the Palestinian Authority throughout the past few months to bring about calm. These efforts have brought about the reduction of violence to the lowest level in 4 years and once again reopened the window of hope for progress toward peace. We emphasized our determination to maintain and preserve this calm. The Palestinian Authority exerts a great deal of efforts in reforming our security organizations, and the truth is, our efforts are fully supported by our own people who repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to peace and negotiations.

In our talks, we also discussed the ongoing democratic process in Palestine. This process has successfully presented, through the Presidential elections and the local and municipal elections, that the Palestinians have succeeded in carrying out transparent and fair elections under very difficult circumstances, another example of the capability of our people and their ability to build an independent democratic state once we achieve our freedom and our independence.

We expect that our people will be helped and supported to make their democratic experiment a successful one. We look forward to the free movement and the freedom of movement and the removal of Israeli roadblock and checkpoints and the Israeli withdrawal to positions prior to September 28th, 2000, and as well as implementing the various understanding that we have reached with the Israeli Government in Sharm al-Sheikh. We stress that democracy cannot flourish under occupation and in the absence of freedom.

In this regard, we expressed our deep concern over the continuous Israeli settlement activities and the construction of the wall on

our land, particularly in the area of Jerusalem. These settlement activities, in addition to undermining President Bush's vision in establishing a Palestinian and contiguous state, that it is a viable state that can live side by side by the state of Israel, also contributes to the feeling of frustration and despair and the loss of hope. Stopping this is one of the requirements of the roadmap. Time is becoming our greatest enemy. We should end this conflict before it is too late.

We are extending our hands to the Israeli people in good intention. We are saying that peace and dialog and the recognition of the other side's rights is what will create a good neighborhood and achieve security and prosperity for our people and the peoples in the region.

We have assured the President that the Palestinian Authority is ready to coordinate with the Israeli side in order to ensure the success of its withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank upon the Israeli evacuation. We see this evacuation as a part of ending the occupation, and it should not be at the expense of the West Bank. We must then immediately move to permanent status negotiations to deal with the issues of Al-Quds—East Jerusalem—as a capital of the future state of Palestine, the issues of refugees, settlements, borders, security, and water, on the basis of President Bush's vision and on the basis of U.N. resolutions and the basis of the Arab Initiative.

It is time for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to end, right now. It is the time for our people, after many decades of suffering and disposessions, to enjoy living in freedom and independence on their own land. And we should accelerate the freedom of our prisoners in order to be a part of peacemaking.

Mr. President, we end our discussions in Washington, and we are more determined to move forward in the path of freedom, reform, and democracy. We depart Washington; we are more confident about the role that you will play and the role that your administration will play in order to move the process forward and achieve lasting peace.

Mr. President, at the end, I would like to thank you very much for your hospitality and

expressing the American—and demonstrating the American support to the Palestinian administration and the Palestinian people. We continue to look forward to work with you ahead in order to achieve our common objectives of peace, security, and democracy and freedom.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**President Bush.** Good job, good job. Two questions a side, starting with Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

### ***Palestinian Democracy/Hamas***

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, you just spoke about the rejection of terror. Are you satisfied that President Abbas is moving aggressively enough, doing everything he can to shut down terror groups? And do you think that he should, for example, close Hamas or remove from positions of power associates of Yasser Arafat?

**President Bush.** I believe that—and I know the President is committed to democracy. After all, he ran on a platform that said, “Vote for me. I’m for peace, and I believe in democracy.” That’s what he told the Palestinian people when he ran, and he won with 62 percent of the vote, I think it was. So in other words, he’s committed. That’s what he said he was going to do, and he’s now fulfilling it.

Our position on Hamas is very clear. It’s a well-known position, and it hasn’t changed about Hamas. Hamas is a terrorist group. It’s on a terrorist list for a reason. As the elections go forward, of course, we want everybody to participate in the vote. There is something healthy about people campaigning, saying, “This is what I’m for.” The President ran on a peace platform. You know, maybe somebody will run on a war platform. You know, “Vote for me. I promise violence.” I don’t think they’re going to get elected, because I think Palestinian moms want their children to grow up in peace just like American moms want their children to grow up in peace. As a matter of fact, I think the people that campaign for peace will win.

The goal of a—is, of course, a Palestinian state based upon rule of law, and you cannot have a democracy based upon rule of law if you have armed bands of people who will use their weapons to try to achieve a political

outcome. We discussed this with the President. He can give you his own views. I will just tell you, he is—he believes strongly in democracy and understands that aspect of democracy.

And so I’m—I think there’s something healing about asking people to vote. And hopefully, as more people participate and more people see progress on the ground in terms of real, tangible benefits when it comes to democracy like being able to make a living or being able to send your child to a school that works or being able to get good quality health care, that more and more people will reject the notion that the only—a state based upon violence is a positive state.

### ***Israeli Settlements/Israeli Security Wall***

**Q.** President Abbas, regarding settlements and the erection of the wall, are your positions before that you gave to your voters among the Palestinian public? And the question to President Bush, we heard your remarks. You talked about clear American position about the issue of settlements. But Israel continues to build settlements and continues to seize Palestinian territories. What is your position, Mr. President?

**President Bush.** Well, I told you what my position was. And it’s exactly what I said when I was in Crawford, by the way, when Prime Minister Sharon was there as well. I mean, when you say you’re going to accept the roadmap, you accept the roadmap, and part of the obligations of the roadmap is not the expansion of settlements. And we continue to remind our friends the Israelis about their obligations under the roadmap, just like we remind President Abbas about the obligations under the roadmap that the Palestinians have accepted. So nothing has changed.

Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters], yes.

Oh, I’m sorry. I beg your pardon.

**President Abbas.** The first one.

**President Bush.** I beg your—sorry, yes. Just trying to cut you off. [Laughter] It’s an old Rose Garden trick.

**President Abbas.** Regarding the issue of settlements and the wall, our position is very clear from the beginning. When we talk about two states, we are talking about a Palestinian state within the boundaries of 1967. That means that those boundaries, in our

views, should go back to the Palestinian people. This is what the roadmap states, and this is what is in various U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Also President Bush talked about ending the occupation that started in 1967. In our views, the wall—there is no justification for the wall, and it is illegitimate, as well as settlements. It is illegitimate and should not allow. We heard from the President that these activities should stop. I believe this is an important step in order to get to the permanent status negotiations. During the permanent status negotiations, we will put all these issues on the table. And we express our views that does not contradict international legitimacy.

**President Bush.** Now Adam.

#### ***Egyptian Presidential Elections***

**Q.** Mr. President, President Bush, the First Lady under the Egyptian pyramids this week enthusiastically endorsed Mubarak's first steps towards direct Presidential elections. Two days later, Mubarak supporters attacked the opposition in the streets. Was it premature to back Mubarak? What's your message to Mubarak now?

**President Bush.** I also embraced President Mubarak's first steps and said that those first steps must include people's ability to have access to TV and candidates ought to be allowed to run freely in an election and that there ought to be international monitors. That's—and the idea of people expressing themselves in opposition to the government and getting a beating, is not our view of how a democracy ought to work. It's not the way that you have free elections. People ought to be allowed to express themselves, and I'm hopeful that the President will have open elections that everybody can have trust in.

Final question here. Oh, sorry. That's what happens when you don't get called on.

#### ***Gaza/Palestinian Democracy***

**Q.** To President Bush, Mr. President, Israel insists on controlling the Gaza airspace as well as the port, after its unilateral withdrawal. What practical steps are you prepared to take, sir, to deter Israel from doing so and ensuring that the Gaza disengagement remains an integral part of the roadmap?

And to President Abbas, in the article that was published in the Wall Street Journal today, you emphasized the link between democracy and freedom. Do you feel concerned that the new Palestinian democracy could go back under the occupation and under the lack of freedom? Thank you.

**President Bush.** Actually, my answer kind of ties into the question you asked the President. You know, one of the things when you are in the position I'm in, I'm able to observe attitudes and opinions. And clearly there's a lot of mistrust, and you can understand why. There's been war, violence, bloodshed. The only way to achieve all the objectives is for there to be a democracy living side by side with a democracy. And the best way to see—to solve problems that seem insoluble now is for there to be a society which evolves based upon democratic principles.

And so there's going to be a lot of issues that come up as this process evolves that are going to be difficult issues. But as more people trust each other, then those issues become easier to solve. And so one of my cautions to both sides in this very important problem is to make sure that we stay focused on getting things right initially, and what needs to happen is that Palestinians, with the world's help, fill the void created by the withdrawal from Gaza with a society which is hopeful. And that means people can find work, and people can send their kids to school, the health care system functions well.

I told the President, there's a lot of international help that will be available, particularly as his Government earns the trust of the donors. And the best way to earn the trust of the donors is to work to develop this—to take advantage of this opportunity and develop a state. Israel has obligations to help. You noticed, in my statement I said “help improve the humanitarian situation on the ground.” And America wants to help.

Now as a democracy evolves and people see that this is a Government fully capable of sustaining democratic institutions and adhering to rule of law and transparency and puts strong anticorruption devices in place, answers to the will of the people, that it becomes easier to deal with issues such as airspace. The West Bank will become an easier

issue for everybody to meet obligations. We've got a fantastic opportunity now.

When I—I told the President, there's no doubt in my mind we can succeed. President Abbas is a man of courage. Part of the success is going to require courageous decision by the President. And I take great faith in not only his personal character but the fact that he campaigned on a platform of peace. He said, "Vote for me. I am for peace." And the Palestinians voted overwhelmingly to support him.

And so there will be a series of issues that come up—you know, how do we deal with this issue, or how do you deal with that issue—all of which will become easier to deal with as the Government succeeds in Gaza. And the United States stands with the Government to help them succeed.

**President Abbas.** Thank you. Regarding the democracy and freedom, I am saying that when we have chosen democracy as a way of life, this was not an adventure. This was a determination and a strategy that democracy is the only way to move forward and for life among different nations. But democracy is like a coin; it has two sides. On one side it's democracy; on the other side of the coin is freedom.

It's true, now we lack freedom, and we are in dire need to have freedom. We do not live in freedom in our homeland. This will weaken the hope to continue this democracy and will weaken the democratic march. But we will not go back. Our strategy is clear, and we are determined to achieve our freedom in order to complete and achieve both sides of the coin, and we can live a normal life.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:31 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. William E. Ward, USA, Senior U.S. Security Coordinator, Department of State; outgoing World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn, Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Commencement Address at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland May 27, 2005

Thanks for the warm welcome. Secretary England, Admiral Clark, General Nyland, Vice Admiral Rempt, Captain Leidig, Dr. Miller, members of the Board of Visitors, Lieutenant Governor Steele and Congressman Hoyer, distinguished faculty, distinguished guests, proud parents, family, friends, and, most of all, the graduating midshipmen of the Class of 2005, I'm honored to be here.

And I am proud to stand before the future leaders of the Navy and Marine Corps. And to celebrate the occasion, I thought I would bring along a small graduation gift. Too late to give you a "Staubach Day," so I'll do the next best thing. In keeping with longstanding tradition, I hereby absolve all midshipmen who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. *[Laughter]* I will leave it to the Admiral to define exactly what "minor" means. *[Laughter]*

You worked hard to get to this moment. You survived Plebe Summer and having your parking tickets scraped. *[Laughter]* You climbed Herndon Monument and threw pennies at Tecumseh, god of the 2.0. I knew him pretty well when I was in school. *[Laughter]* Now, at last, you've made it to graduation day, and in a few moments, you will receive your military commissions and your diplomas. Your parents are proud of you; your teachers are proud of you; and so is your Commander in Chief. Congratulations on a great achievement.

A lot has changed since you arrived at Annapolis 4 years ago. Navy football went 0 and 10 in your plebe year. This year, you went 10 and 2, and you won your second Commander in Chief's Trophy in a row. I'd like the record to show that your turnaround started the year after I delivered your commencement address. *[Laughter]* So to ensure the continued domination of Navy football, I thought I'd just swing by for a return visit.

When I spoke to the Class of 2001, none of us imagined that a few months later we would suffer a devastating surprise attack on our homeland or that our Nation would be

plunged into a global war unlike any we had known before. Today, we face brutal and determined enemies, men who celebrate murder, incite suicide, and thirst for absolute power. These enemies will not be stopped by negotiations or concessions or appeals to reason. In this war, there is only one option, and that is victory.

Today I'm going to talk about our strategy for victory in this war, what we've accomplished to make our Nation more secure, your crucial role in this struggle, and why we need you to fight the war on terror and transform our military at the same time. In the 21st century, America will be prepared to answer any challenge and defeat any adversary.

Our Nation is pursuing a clear strategy for the war on terror. We're using every available tool to disrupt terrorists and their organizations. We are taking the fight to the enemy abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We're denying the terrorists sanctuary and making clear that America will not tolerate outlaw regimes that provide safe haven and support to terrorists. We're using all elements of national power to deny terrorists the chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons they seek. We will not allow mass murderers to gain access to the tools of mass destruction. And we're stopping terrorists from achieving their ideological victories they seek, by working to spread the hope of freedom and reform across the broader Middle East. We understand that free nations do not support terrorists or invade their neighbors. We understand to make the world more peaceful and our country more secure, we will advance the cause of liberty.

Thanks to the men and women of the United States military, our strategy is working; we are winning the war on terror. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've removed brutal regimes in Kabul and Baghdad that supported and harbored terrorists. We helped launch Afghanistan and Iraq on the path to lasting freedom by liberating over 50 million people. Both these nations have now chosen their leaders in free elections, and their courage is inspiring democratic reformers across the broader Middle East to rise up and claim their liberty.

To stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, we broke up the world's most dangerous nuclear trading network. We convinced Libya's leader to give up his country's chemical and nuclear weapons programs as well as his long-range ballistic missiles. Two years ago, we launched the Proliferation Security Initiative, an effort supported by 60 nations to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction on land, at sea, and in the air. We have gone after Al Qaida and other terrorists with relentless determination, disrupting their communications, planning, training, and financing. We have put the enemy on the run, and now they spend their days avoiding capture, because they know that America's armed services are on their trail.

And we will stay on their trail. The best way to protect our citizens is to stay on the offensive. In the last few weeks, we've dealt the enemy a series of powerful blows. In Afghanistan, we brought to justice scores of terrorists and insurgents. In Pakistan, one of Usama Bin Laden's senior terrorist leaders, a man named al-Libbi, was brought to justice. In Iraq, we captured two senior operatives of the terrorist Zarqawi. And in recent days, our forces have killed or captured hundreds of terrorists and insurgents in Baghdad and western Iraq and near the Syrian border. Across the world, our military is standing directly between the American people and the worst dangers in the world, and Americans are grateful to have such brave defenders.

Difficult and dangerous work remains. Suicide bombers in Iraq are targeting innocent men, women, and children, hoping to intimidate Iraq's new leaders and shake the will of the Iraqi people. They will fail. Iraqis are determined, and our strategy is clear. We will train Iraqi forces so they can take the fight to the enemy and defend their own country, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

The midshipmen I addressed here 4 years ago are now serving bravely in this struggle. The new officers who sat in the chairs where you now sit could not have known that their strength and character would be tested so soon. In the last 4 years, they've met every test and overcome every challenge. And they

are setting a lasting example of courage for the classes that follow.

Sitting in the crowd 4 years ago was Midshipman Edward Slavis. When I gave the order to liberate Iraq, he charged across the Kuwaiti border, leading a rifle platoon through 21 days of tough fighting into the heart of Baghdad. His battalion helped pull down the statue of Saddam Hussein. Ed says, "I will have time for myself later. Now I just feel privileged to spend my life doing something much larger than myself." He went on to say, "The mission will be a success, and 20 or 30 years from now, historians will look back on the mission to Iraq as America's golden moment." Ed Slavis is serving his country with courage, and he's adding to the history of this Academy.

Sitting in the crowd that day was Midshipman Josh Glover. He would soon risk his life in the city of Fallujah, fighting through a half-mile of enemy territory to rescue a platoon of Marines pinned down by insurgents. Josh says, "They had casualties and a Marine who had been killed. We were shooting 360 degrees." Josh and his men recovered that fallen Marine and saved the platoon and helped us win a critical battle in the war on terror.

Sitting in the crowd that day was a midshipman whose name I cannot mention because he went on to join the secret world of Navy special operations. He would soon deploy to Afghanistan with his Navy SEAL team, where he conducted lightning raids that captured dozens of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. He even helped protect a very distinguished visitor to Afghanistan, the First Lady of the United States. And if he's out there listening, I've got a message for that courageous Navy frogman: Thanks for defending America, and thanks for taking such good care of my bride.

Also sitting in the crowd that day was Midshipman Bobby Rashad Jones. He would go on to serve as a deck division officer onboard the U.S.S. *Germantown*, ensuring the safe landing of marines and Seabees, in hostile territory during antiterrorist operations in the Philippines. Bobby was the "anchorman" of the Class of 2001. He was the guy that gave me that bear hug. [Laughter] Four years later, my ribs still hurt—[laughter]—so don't

get any ideas. [Laughter] Here's what Bobby says, "Once I got to my ship after 9/11, it did not matter where I graduated. The expectations of Annapolis graduates never change, and I am proud to be part of the elite and unique tradition of the United States Naval Academy." I want to thank Bobby for his service and thank Bobby for witnessing your graduation today.

The members of the Class of 2001 have grown into experienced, battle-hardened Navy and Marine officers. They are serving our Nation with valor and distinction, and soon you'll join them. Four years at this Academy have prepared you morally, mentally, and physically for the challenges ahead. And now the American people are depending on you to uphold the high ideals you learned here as midshipmen. I know that in the war on terror, the members of the Class of 2005 will walk with honor, and you will make America proud.

In this time of unprecedented dangers, we need you to take on two difficult missions at once: We need you to defeat the terrorists who want to destroy what we stand for and how we live; and at the same time, we need you to transform our military for the 21st century, so we can deter and defeat the new adversaries who may threaten our people in the decades ahead.

The lesson of September the 11th is clear: New dangers can arrive on our shores without warning. In this era of surprise, we cannot know for certain who might attack us or where or when. But we can anticipate how we might be attacked, and we can transform our capabilities to defend our citizens and deliver justice to our enemies.

To meet the threats of the 21st century, we are developing new technologies that will make our forces faster, lighter, more agile, and more lethal. In our time, terrible dangers can arise on a short moment anywhere in the world, and we must be prepared to oppose these dangers everywhere in the world.

Since taking office, my administration has invested \$16 billion to build transformational military capabilities. We've requested an additional 78 billion for these efforts over the next 4 years. We've invested \$240 billion in research and development so we can build

even more advanced capabilities in the decades ahead. We requested \$275 billion for these efforts over the next 4 years. These investments will help us keep the peace by redefining war on our terms. And so long as I am your President, you will have the very best equipment and the resources you need to get the job done.

We've already seen the power of technology to transform our forces. In the 1991 Persian Gulf war, aircraft taking off from a carrier deck could engage about 200 targets per day. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, that number jumped to over 600 targets a day, 3 times the capability. And in each year, those capabilities are becoming more and more precise. In Iraq, we used a new Hellfire missile for the first time, which can take out enemy fighters hiding on one floor of a building, without destroying the floors above and below. This missile is capable of reaching around corners to strike enemy forces that hide in caves and bunkers and hardened multiroom complexes. In the coming years, there are going to be some awfully surprised terrorists when the thermobaric Hellfire comes knocking.

Revolutionary advances in technology are transforming war in our favor. And in the decades ahead, the changes will be even more dramatic. We will deploy unmanned underwater vehicles that can go where no submarine can go today. We will deploy advanced destroyers capable of shooting down ballistic missiles and transformed strike submarines that can silently carry special operation forces and cruise missiles within striking distance of our adversaries. We are developing joint sea bases that will allow our forces to strike from floating platforms close to the action, instead of being dependent on land bases far from the fight.

We're also harnessing advances in information technology, such as undersea surveillance systems, to provide our forces with near total battle-space awareness. And technology is allowing us to improve the ability of the Navy and Army and Air Force and Marines to work together as a truly joint force, with innovations like joint tactical radio that will allow all services to share information in the heat of battle. These technological advances will put unprecedented agility, speed, preci-

sion, and power in your hands, and you will use them to protect the American people in the dangerous decades ahead.

Technology changes the balance of war in a very important way. We can now strike our enemies with greater effectiveness, at greater range, with fewer civilian casualties. In this new era, we can target a regime, not a nation, and that means terrorists and tyrants can no longer feel safe hiding behind innocent life. In the 21st century, we can target the guilty and protect the innocent, and that makes it easier to keep the peace.

To meet the threats of the 21st century, we must reposition our forces at home and abroad. Today, much of our military is still deployed in ways that reflect the threats of the 20th century. So last summer, I announced the biggest transformation of our global force posture since the end of the World War II. Over the coming decade, we will reposition our forces so they can surge quickly to deal with unexpected threats. We will deploy increased combat power across the world. And we will bring home between 60,000 to 70,000 uniformed personnel currently stationed overseas. These changes will reduce the stress on your families, raise the pressure on our enemies, and ensure that you remain the most powerful and effective fighting force on Earth.

To meet new threats, we must transform our domestic force posture as well, and that will require closing and realigning military bases. The military services have each done a review of their requirements, and they have concluded that we have more bases than we need. Supporting these facilities wastes billions of taxpayers' dollars, money that can be better spent on giving you the tools to fight terrorists and confront 21st-century threats. Two weeks ago, the Defense Department presented the military's recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. This is only the beginning of the process. Commission members will now visit all the sites that the military has recommended for closure, and communities will have the opportunity to make their case directly to the Commission.

I know first hand how hard base closings can be on local communities. I was the Governor of Texas during the last round of base

closures, when facilities were shut down in places like Lubbock and Laredo and Austin. We'll do everything possible to help affected communities make the transition as smoothly as possible, by providing economic development aid, job training, and assistance with redevelopment plans for affected bases. This process will be impartial and fair, and it will produce a net savings of \$48 billion over the next 20 years. It will result in a military that is more efficient and better prepared, so you can better protect the American people against the dangers of this new century.

Transformation requires more than high-tech weapons; it requires creativity, ingenuity, and a willingness to try new things. All the advanced technology in the world will not transform our military if we do not transform our thinking.

Sometimes, transformation means using old capabilities in new ways. In Afghanistan, our troops rode into battle on horseback, but they did it while using GPS and advanced satellite communications to call in air strikes on enemy positions. They combined a staple of 19th century warfare with the most advanced 21st century technology, and they helped remove a dangerous threat to America.

As you begin your military careers, we need you to bring that same spirit of creativity and innovation to your work. Seek out the innovative leaders in our military, work with them and learn from them, and they will help you to become leaders yourselves. Show courage and not just on the battlefield. Pursue the possibilities others tell you do not exist.

This advice comes with a warning: If you challenge established ways of thinking, you will face opposition. Believe me, I know, I've lived in Washington for the past 4 years. The opponents of change are many, and its champions are few, but the champions of change are the ones who make history. Be champions, and you will make America safer for your children and your grandchildren, and you'll add to the character of our Nation.

And as you begin your military careers, proceed with confidence, because our citizens are determined, our country is strong, and the future belongs to freedom. Across the world, liberty is on the march. In the

last 18 months, we have witnessed a Rose Revolution in Georgia, an Orange Revolution in the Ukraine, a Purple Revolution in Iraq, a Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and a Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, and these are only the beginning. Across central Asia and the broader Middle East, we are seeing the rise of a new generation whose hearts burn for liberty, and they are going to have it. America is standing with these democratic reformers because we know that the only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror and replace hatred with hope is the force of human freedom. And by extending freedom to millions who have not known it, we will advance the cause of peace and make America more secure.

Some of our men and women in uniform have given their lives in this cause, and others have returned home with terrible injuries. America honors their sacrifice, and we will uphold the cause they served. You are the ones who will take up their mantle and carry on their fight and ensure the triumph of liberty in the century ahead.

You are now part of the greatest force for freedom in the history of the world, the Armed Forces of the United States. In the years ahead, you will see dramatic changes taking place all around you. Yet amid all the tumult and change, there is one thing that won't change, and that is character of our men and women who wear the uniform. This is your generation's moment. Your mission is necessary, and it is noble. The weapons you use will be more powerful and precise than those available to Annapolis graduates who came before you, and you will face enemies they never imagined. But what will make your success possible is the same thing that made their success possible, the courage and honor and personal integrity that you learned at this Academy.

We're going to give you the tools you'll need to prevail in today's war on terror and the capabilities you'll need to protect us against the dangers that may yet emerge. Now the task is in your hands, and that means it is in the best of hands. Thank you for your courageous decision to serve. Bring honor to the uniform, security to our country, and peace to the world. And congratulations to every member of the Class of 2005.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in the Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England; Adm. Vern Clark, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; Gen. William L. Nyland, USMC, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; Vice Adm. Rodney P. Rempt, USN, superintendent, Capt. Charles J. Leidig, Jr., USN, commandant of midshipmen, and William C. Miller, academic dean and provost, U.S. Naval Academy; Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele of Maryland; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Abu Faraj al-Libbi, senior Al Qaida associate arrested in Pakistan on April 30; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Giving Notification of Intent To Reallocate Funds Previously Transferred From the Emergency Response Fund**  
May 27, 2005

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

I am notifying the Congress of my intent to reallocate funds previously transferred from the Emergency Response Fund (ERF).

To promote democracy and freedom, \$7.7 million of ERF funds will be reallocated within the Broadcasting Board of Governors to support the operational costs of Arabic radio and television broadcasting to the Middle East.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

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**Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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**May 21**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Grand Rapids, MI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Ruth Dekker. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, the President attended the White House News Photographers' Association "Eyes of History" gala.

**May 23**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Mrs. Bush to discuss her ongoing travels in the Middle East.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy to discuss United Nations Security Council reform and other issues.

**May 24**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Rochester, NY, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer George-Ann Schaufele. He then traveled to Greece, NY.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Residence, he met with Republican Members of the House of Representatives to discuss legislative priorities.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to the White House on June 8.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea to the White House for a meeting and working lunch on June 10.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jan E. Boyer to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The President announced his intention to nominate Timothy E. Flanigan to be Deputy

Attorney General at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate William Alan Jeffrey to be Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ashok G. Kaveeshwar to be Administrator of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Walter Lukken to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kathie L. Olsen to be Deputy Director of the National Science Foundation.

#### **May 25**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Awards. Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he met with the President's Export Council.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to the White House on June 1.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Denmark on July 6, prior to his participation in the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland.

The President announced that he has named Rhonda Keenum as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Public Liaison.

The President announced that he has named Juan Carlos Zarate as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for Combating Terrorism.

#### **May 26**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate William C. Anderson to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Installations and Environment).

The President announced his intention to nominate Israel Hernandez to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Philip D. Morrison to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Tax Policy).

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald E. Neumann to be Ambassador to Afghanistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard A. Raymond to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Food Safety.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory L. Schulte to be U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and U.S. Representative to the IAEA, with the rank of Ambassador.

#### **May 27**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Annapolis, MD.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Organization of American States Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza of Chile to the White House on May 31.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Vietnam to the White House on June 21.

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## **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

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### ***Submitted May 23***

Arlene Holen,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring August 30, 2010, vice Robert H. Beatty, Jr., term expired.

Tom Luce,  
of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education, vice Bruno Victor Mano, resigned.

Rod J. Rosenstein,  
of Maryland, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland for the term of 4 years, vice Thomas M. DiBiagio.

### ***Submitted May 25***

Jan E. Boyer,  
of Texas, to be U.S. Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, vice Hector E. Morales.

William Alan Jeffrey,  
of Virginia, to be Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, vice Arden Bement, Jr.

Ashok G. Kaveeshwar,  
of Maryland, to be Administrator of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Department of Transportation, vice Ellen G. Engleman, resigned.

Walter Lukken,  
of Indiana, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2010 (reappointment).

Kathie L. Olsen,  
of Oregon, to be Deputy Director of the National Science Foundation, vice Joseph Bordogna.

John M. Reich,  
of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Thrift Supervision for a term expiring October 23, 2007, vice James Gilleran, term expired.

### ***Submitted May 26***

William Anderson,  
of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Nelson F. Gibbs.

Israel Hernandez,  
of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service, vice Rhonda Keenum.

Philip D. Morrison,  
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Pamela F. Olson, resigned.

Ronald E. Neumann,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Randal Quarles,  
of Utah, to be an Under Secretary of the Treasury, vice Brian Carlton Roseboro.

Richard A. Raymond,  
of Nebraska, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Food Safety, vice Elsa A. Murano, resigned.

Gregory L. Schulte,  
of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador.

Gregory L. Schulte,  
of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

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## **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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### ***Released May 23***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

### ***Released May 24***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey to Washington

Statement by the Press Secretary: President To Welcome South Korean President Roh

Fact sheet: Valuing Life Through Embryo Adoption and Ethical Stem Cell Research

### ***Released May 25***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of South African President Thabo Mbeki

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Visit Denmark

Fact sheet: Developing Clean and Secure Energy Through Hydrogen Fuel

### ***Released May 26***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

### ***Released May 27***

Statement by the Press Secretary: Organization of American States (OAS) Secretary General To Meet With President Bush

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Vietnam to Washington

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## **Acts Approved by the President**

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NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.